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THE TAMING OF SYLVIA

By Elizabeth Duer

WE are settled in our new house, Grandpapa and I, in East Sixty—but I shall not tell which of the Sixty streets, for I do not want people walking past and saying, “There is where Sylvia Stirling lives, whose affairs have just been published in *THE SMART SET*.” Privacy must be respected.

How I did hate moving up town! The old house above the Astoria was so delightfully situated. You had only to sit in the windows and you knew exactly who was attentive to whom, and saw all the smart new fashions; and when there were parades, how all one’s friends just happened in, while they abused the nuisance and never left till the Veteran G. A. R.’s, who bring up the tail end of all processions, bored them away from the windows! To be sure, I have outgrown such things now.

Grandpapa got lots of money for the old house, which was only natural, seeing it was on a corner. Old Mr. de Trasque came in the day we received the offer, and Grandpapa said how he hated the uprooting, but added, “Who could afford to refuse five hundred thousand dollars?”

“You can, General, and I’d think it damned respectable of you to do it, too,” retorted Mr. de Trasque. “There isn’t such a thing as an old family house in the city of New York. Every second generation is so greedy for money that it would throw the bones of its ancestors into the ashcart if the graves were needed for business purposes.”

“That is all nonsense,” said Grandpapa. “I’m not going to hold on to property till it’s past its prime, to

please you, or my ancestors either. We will go up near the Park and build for half the money we got for this, and the rest shall be Sylvia’s *dot*. That’s all right, isn’t it, Syl?”

“I never expect to require a *dot*,” I answered, “if you move so far away from everybody. I am told it is proximity that does the trick.”

“Sylvia,” said the General, “you are vulgar.”

“Slangy, *perhaps*,” I said. “Your grandchild could not be vulgar.”

Grandpapa is an old beauty. He is over six feet tall and straight as a lance, and with the grandest shoulders and the deepest chest, and his waist is too lovely. If you put your arm round him I should not like to bet you wouldn’t feel a belt with bones in it, but that isn’t the same thing as corsets, is it? Then Grandpapa’s hair is white and curly and his mustaches are waxed in the most fetching points. And when he laughs his teeth are like a boy’s, and all his own, too. Maybe you can guess how old he is when I say he would have been retired from the army last year if he had not resigned twenty years ago.

I wonder why the course of fashion in New York takes its way eastward. There seems no especial reason for it. The West Side is equally attractive where it skirts the Park, and as for the Riverside, it is the most beautiful residential quarter that any city can boast of; and yet the palaces of the West Side are not the homes of old New Yorkers nor even of the ultra-fashionable newly rich. Perhaps one explanation may be found in the situation of the clubs, which are more accessible from the east. I know life

would be colorless to Grandpapa if he could not start his day at the Union, happen in at the Knickerbocker, keep his saddle horses at the Riding Club and play his whist every evening at the Metropolitan. The last named club is so convenient to our new house that I mean to dine there with Grandpapa every other Sunday evening, when the cook goes out.

We have built with the idea of entertaining, and the main floor is rather formal, with great drawing-rooms and a ballroom, and a dining-room opposite the front door, with the nicest conservatory on one side. Upstairs a library stretches nearly across the front of the house, and here we really live and move and have our being, which means afternoon tea.

I haven't many female friends (only Sally Van Boskirk and Mrs. Lyon Brassey, a widow taking lots of notice), because Grandpapa thinks poorly of women. He says they gossip and make mischief by repeating, and they have no sense of honor, and so he had me educated with Bobby de Trasque, old Mr. de Trasque's second son. We shared all our tutors, and I can read Greek and Latin at sight and do my trigonometry just as well as Bobby; and I can skate and ride and box and fence; but I do not know one single feminine accomplishment, unless French can be so considered. Mamma was a Frenchwoman, and before her death I spoke no other language. But if one weighed Bobby's talent for gossip against any woman's I know, the scales would bounce the lady high in the air.

The afternoon on which my story opens Bobby and I were in the library waiting for the General to come home to tea. The room was lighted only by a great fire of sea coals, but it roared and glowed till the farthest corner dismissed its shadows. The tea table, brilliant with well-kept silver, was drawn up beside a low chair, and close to that shrine of cakes and hot muffins our enormous bandy-legged bulldog leaned his expectant jowl on the rim of the salver.

The room is handsome, though

rather quiet in coloring, the ornaments few in number but each one beautiful and perfect of its kind, and the wall spaces above the low book-cases filled by an admirable collection of modern paintings. Our masterpiece, however, occupies the panel of the chimney-place. It is a portrait of my father, Sylvan Stirling, dead before my baby eyes opened on the world, but as much alive in the heart of my grandfather as if they still loved and quarreled and made friends again. He had been painted in a velvet-reen shooting-jacket, with his hands plunged deep into the pockets of his knickerbockers; the attitude was full of vitality and strength; the face—how shall I describe the face! First it fixed your attention, then it won your heart, then it lived in your memory forever. The lines of the mouth and chin were exquisitely modeled and feminine in their tenderness, the nose straight and short like a Greek athlete's, the green-gray eyes danced with fun, and the well-shaped head was crowned with close-cut curls of pale-red hair.

I stood with my back to the fire, lifting first one and then the other wet sole of my walking-boots to the grateful warmth, for I had been out and it was raining. This was a favorite position with me, for it flattered my vanity to draw attention to the resemblance I bore to my father; and many a scolding have I escaped by managing to direct Grandpapa's eyes from Sylvia below to Sylvan above.

The evening papers and the General's letters, which had accumulated during the day, were neatly arranged on the writing table. Bobby swept the whole batch with the tail of his eye (I quote his language, which is more descriptive than mine) and lit on one with a French stamp.

"Look here, Syl," he cried, "isn't this your Grandmother de Treville's writing? What do you bet she isn't coming out here to stir up Hail Columbia?"

"Of course she's coming," I answered, sulkily; "this is to tell Grandpapa by which steamer. Won't you

have to mind your p's and q's!" I added. "Instead of bolting up stairs the moment the front door's opened and singing out: 'Oh, Syl!' you will have to ask for the Countess and convey to her that speech with Miss Stirling would be precious to you."

"Sort of bold in the old lady, ain't it?" said Bobby, "settling herself right in a bachelor's establishment with no chaperon except you."

I had never before thought of this view of the subject, but if a French countess did not know the proprieties they must be beyond knowledge. The matter did not concern me, however. What I minded was the process of being licked into shape which seemed so imminent—having my vocabulary, which I felt to be somewhat florid, shorn of its choicest blossoms, and my freedom to run about the town unattended curtailed. My dress, too, might not give satisfaction; Bobby and I ordered about the same things (except that I wore skirts!) and he and Grandpapa thought me a very well-dressed woman, though perhaps the build was not truly Parisian.

I answered Bobby's outraged conventionality about the Countess's visit by remarking:

"Perhaps she may ward off some of his other suitors. The shameless way in which his female friends run after him makes my blood boil."

At this moment a voice at the library door cried:

"Grandpa in, Sylvia?"

It was Mrs. Brassey—bounding up stairs while Stubbs was throwing open the drawing-room door for her. The liberties that woman allows herself! I meant to be impertinent.

"Not in *here*, Mrs. Brassey. Have you tried his bedroom?"

"Sylvia!" she gasped, in a shocked voice, holding her feather boa before her brazen face. "If you were not such a child I should be annoyed with you. I particularly wish to see your grandfather about taking you to the play this evening."

"He will soon be in," I answered, much mollified, for I love the theatre. "In the meanwhile, may I give

you some tea? So good of you to make such a pleasant plan for me; it leaves Grandpapa free for his whist at the club."

Her face fell. "I had hoped General Stirling would come with us," she murmured, but I affected not to hear. Presently she asked: "What is to be done about your coming out this Winter? You must not hesitate to call upon me whenever you need a chaperon. Anything I can do to assist will be a true pleasure. Might we not get the General to give you a series of dinners, to start the season?"

"I'm to have a chaperon," I said, affecting a sad look, "but evidently you have not heard our little secret."

She began to look nervous, and I thought she changed color. "Is the chaperon of your choosing or the General's?" she asked.

"Dear Mrs. Brassey, you cannot suppose he would leave *such* a choice to me!" and I smiled knowingly.

"Do you mean the General is going to be married?" she gasped.

"How can you imagine anything so unlikely!" I said, with the air of one vainly trying to hide a discovered secret. "But indeed you must not urge me to tell what I have been forbidden to mention just yet." And the subject dropped, much to the lady's chagrin.

The visit was prolonged until no bone of conversation remained ungnawed, and finally, having included Bobby in her party for the theatre, she left. Five minutes later the General appeared, fairly blooming from his walk home through wind and rain.

I picked up the Countess's letter and flung myself upon him with it.

"You have come at last!" I said, "and here is a letter from Grandmamma de Treville which has been maddening my curiosity for hours. Read it quickly, please."

"When I was young," said the General, nodding "how d'ye do" to Bobby, "among well-bred people the outside of a letter was as sacred from prying curiosity as the inside," and he laid the letter face downward on the table and still further asserted himself as

a disciplinarian by removing George Washington from the tea-tray with a convincing shove and by ringing for lights.

"If I were old," I said, "I should not snub my only female relative, particularly before a callow youth," and I indicated Bobby with a wave of my muffin.

I never bear resentment, so I delivered Mrs. Brassey's message, and was vexed enough to find Grandpapa meant to accept; it would have been so much nicer if her fishing for him had resulted in her catching only Bobby and me. Can it be that Grandpapa likes her? Perish the thought!

It was Bobby's turn to make the next break.

"I've just been at the Skating Rink to pay my dues and Sylvia's, General," he said, "for which you owe me a tenner, sir—and on my way down I stopped at the Riding Club to look at the mare. She is all right. Sylvia can ride to-morrow. We are rather anxious to whoop things up a bit, for Syl tells me her grandmother is coming, and we want all the fun we can get, in case the old lady should shut down on Syl."

The General stiffened.

"Mme. de Treville may not be coming," he said, "but if I have been fortunate enough to persuade her to do so, Sylvia will not find herself under any unnecessary restraint. It sometimes strikes me that you two young people have been allowed a very undesirable amount of freedom."

"You are hardly fair, General," said Bobby, haughtily. "What would Syl have amounted to without me, now I ask you? She is hard as nails, a good all-round sport, and yet she doesn't do anything well enough to make her a bore."

"You have certainly been a most efficient aid in my plans for her education," Grandpapa answered, kindly, "but she has outgrown us, Bobby; we must pass her on to more experienced hands."

The old gentleman put down his teacup and patted my sleek head. Then he seated himself at the table and examined the outside of his let-

ters, arranging them in a pile and glancing impatiently at Bobby over the top of his glasses. Seeing no evidence on that young gentleman's part of a hurried departure, he administered a hint.

"Since you are included in Mrs. Brassey's party to see Irving this evening, suppose you dine with us at half-past seven,—” and his tone implied, "and go home till then."

Bobby threw the rest of the biscuit he was munching to Wash and took his leave. He gave one tragic glance of baffled curiosity at the Countess's letter as he shut the door.

I wandered back to my place before the fire. The General was inclined to be fractious, I feared; his heart-strings needed a touch. He was opening *the* letter and unfolding it slowly, when I put my arms around his neck.

"We have been happy together, Grantha dear, haven't we? And you are giving up the old life, not because I am a tomboy or unmanageable, but because you feel responsible to the other side of my family? I want you to promise that in the future—let us say next Winter—after I have done my young lady stunts, that we shall all come back to common sense and be exactly as we are to-day."

"Life doesn't stand still, my love, even for reluctant little girls. I am afraid when my sleeping princess is once awake she will be like all the others, and follow some intruding fellow across the world, as her mother did before her."

Grandpapa's eyes sought the portrait. He sighed and began reading the letter aloud:

"PARIS, November 1.

"MY DEAR GENERAL:

"In answer to both your propositions, I desire to return a cordial assent—that Sylvia should be introduced this Winter, and that I should spend the season with her, in order to aid you in such an onerous task.

"In any event, I should have been obliged to go over this Winter on account of business of an urgent nature.

"The sad memories that such a visit

must entail you can well imagine, but I shall try not to overshadow either you or my grandchild with my own melancholy.

"Now that Sylvia has reached womanhood, I hope you have made it clear to her that the fact that only one grandparent has had any share in her bringing up was the result of circumstances, and not want of interest on my part. The child of my beloved Louise must ever hold half my heart.

"You will be interested to hear that Sir John and Adèle are to spend the Winter in Constantinople. He has been advanced to the position of first secretary of legation. This makes my visit to America most opportune, as our house here is to be given up within the fortnight.

"I shall sail on the *Campania* on the 11th, and shall hope to be with you a week later than my letter.

"Tell our Sylvia that I am taking a grandmother's privilege of replenishing her wardrobe with a trunkful of French frocks and furbelows.

"I have misgivings lest my long residence abroad may have unfitted me to cope with the American girl, but I shall rely upon you to interpret us to each other.

"With my regards to you, my dear friend, and love to Sylvia, I am, always,

"Sincerely yours,

"SUSAN DE TREVILLE."

"I don't like that letter!" I exclaimed, my eyes blazing. "'Cope with the American girl,' indeed! One would think I belonged to a Wild West show. And now I come to think of it, I do consider that, as a grandmother, the Countess has failed in every duty, and—" sidling close to Grandpapa—"don't you think she is rather snapping the bait? Only a cable can stop her now. Send it, Grandpapa!" imploringly. "Tell her I have developed lung trouble," and I gave a rasping cough, "and that I have been ordered to the South Sea Islands, and she had better stop where she is."

"And I do not like your tone," the General replied. "Your mother's mother is more than welcome to my house. You misjudge the whole situation. You seem to think that chaperoning you is a thing to be snapped

at, whereas I feel that asking a lady with foreign ideas to undertake you is like expecting a hen to chaperon a duck."

"But Grandmamma is not a foreigner. She is American born and bred, and probably in her youth gave her parents as much trouble as I shall give her," and I meant my manner to have the suggestion of a threat.

The unmarried, who are always so replete with good advice to parents, have laid it down as an axiom that argument with the child is the destruction of authority, but as few of their homilies have been addressed to grandparents, these last may be excused if sometimes they fall into error. Grandpapa here made the mistake of arguing with me in my grandmother's defense. He harked back to old times: to my father's early marriage and death, and the beauty of my mother's character, which he ascribed to the Countess's influence. He dwelt upon her kindness in leaving me to comfort him when the death of my mother had made him more than ever lonely; then he touched lightly upon the advantages to be derived from Grandmamma's social experiences, and wound up with an explanation of her apparent lack of interest in me by adding:

"She has been completely absorbed by Lady Vincent, who is both delicate in health and in rather limited circumstances; indeed, I fancy your grandmother's income has been all that has kept Sir John's head above the waters of debt for several years. The fact that she is willing to leave them and come to you this Winter ought to convince you of her affection."

"It suggests to me that perhaps Sir John wants his wife to himself for a few months without his mother-in-law," I said, flippantly. "Don't be preachy-preachy any longer, Grantha dear. It does not become warriors, and it bores me."

I kissed the top of his head and flew off to dress for dinner.

At the theatre Mrs. Brassey put

Bobby and me in the front of the box and kept Grandpapa caged in a dark corner at the back, so that in order to see the stage he had to crane his neck over her shoulder, till I wondered the point of his mustache did not run into her eye. I made sure he would see through such open maneuvers, but on the contrary, he was delighted with her, and my sharp ears heard him confiding all his plans for Grandmamma de Treville's coming, and she had the impudence to answer:

"Only a very elderly woman could possibly accept such an invitation from a gay bachelor, dear General."

Odious woman!

The moment the curtain went down on the first act Bobby plied me with questions about the letter.

"When is she coming?"

"Saturday of next week, on the *Campania*," I answered, with a sigh.

"Isn't she the swift mover!" he exclaimed. "But cheer up, Syl; never say die, old girl; perhaps the ship may go to the bottom. On second thoughts, though, I mustn't hope that," he added, "for I have trouble of my own on that ship. Paul is coming home."

"Trouble!" I repeated. "Why, it's glorious! Dear old Paul! how glad I shall be to see him again! How horrid of you, Bobby, to speak of him like that!"

"Paul is a muff," Bobby continued; "he is too lazy to do anything but write and write all day, and my father is so silly about him—fancies he is going to be the philologist of the Twentieth century, now that Max Müller's dead. What do you think was the last thing Paul did before leaving Cambridge?—*published a book of verses!*" and a glow of shame overspread Bobby's retroussé features as he recalled the dishonor inflicted upon the de Trasque family.

"Poor Bobby!" I said, mockingly. "You naturally feel it a strange thing for an able-bodied man to do!"

"Translations from the Sanscrit!" groaned Bobby, as if this last admission completed the family disgrace.

"Come, now, that's not so bad. You

know he might have written about love and such trash!" This I said hesitatingly, for I love poetry passionately, and would not let Bobby suspect it for the world.

"Not so mawkish, perhaps," he admitted, "but it shows the kind of man he is," and the curtain going up, Bobby was forced to brood upon his wrongs in silence.

As we left the theatre Bobby was making plans for the next day. "Our last free Saturday," he called it. He was to call for me at eleven, and we were to spend the morning at the Skating Rink and the afternoon riding in the Park. Grandpapa suddenly turned on us and said:

"You will take your maid with you to the rink, and in the afternoon I shall ride with you myself; not but what we shall be pleased if you will join us," he added, addressing Bobby.

"He has gone stark, staring mad," whispered my aggrieved companion; "putting on lugs like that when we've been painting the town any color we liked for the last ten years! Cultivating French finicles, I suppose!" Then aloud to Grandpapa, as he helped us into the carriage, "There is a proverb you may have heard, General: 'Countesses make cowards of us all,' " and slamming the door before Grandpapa could reprove him, he raised his hat and was lost in the crowd.

I fell asleep that night wondering what Paul de Trasque's poems were like. Would he remember me as a tomboy or accept me as a full-fledged young woman? Five years ago he had gone abroad to study, and now he was coming home laden with academic honors and a European reputation as an Oriental scholar. I felt a little shy about his return, but delightfully excited. I had once cherished for him the secret admiration little girls of fourteen are apt to feel for romantic-looking young men who take no notice of them. I could remember that he sat a horse better than Bobby, though he was not much good at his fences, and in spite of Bobby's contempt for his shortcomings in athletics, his figure had a supple

strength and grace that made our Robert seem stoggy. I began to wish his last impression of me, the afternoon he went away, had not been when I was waltzing with Bobby on roller skates in the middle of the asphalted side street to the music of a hand organ.

II

As the week wore on I noticed that Grandpapa was a little nervous lest proper care should not be taken to make Grandmamma de Treville's arrival as agreeable as possible. A bedroom, boudoir and bathroom were prepared for her, and orders left with the telegraph office that a despatch should be sent to the house the instant the vessel was reported. Up to bedtime on Friday night no news had come, and I went to sleep hoping we might at least get our breakfast in peace. Soon after midnight, however, there was a peal at the doorbell, and I put on my wrapper, meaning to call one of the servants, but as I opened my door I saw the General, in his quilted silk dressing-gown, scurrying down the front stairs, while the cord and tassels of the garment flapped from step to step behind him. I heard the door open and shut and then his step slowly mounting the stair. Coming out into the hall, I asked the news, and he handed me the despatch. "Steamship *Campania* will *probably*," said the cautious operator, "be at her dock at 7.30 Saturday morning, unless detained at Quarantine."

"You will want coffee at half-past six," I began, but he interrupted me.

"Go directly back to bed and get all the sleep you can. I will attend to the orders myself."

Most male housekeepers would hesitate before venturing on the ticklish undertaking of rousing a sleeping cook to change the breakfast hour; but not so the General. He switched on the electric lights, and remarking, "There ought to be a bell here that connects with the servants' quarters,"

he began fumbling with all the buttons he could find. I got so interested in his performances that I crept out into the passage to see what he would do in case there was no response to his summons. Evidently his household had good consciences and slept soundly, for no one answered. The General began an ascent, and walking warily down the fourth-story corridors, he called Stubbs, the butler, whose room, he seemed to imagine, was the one nearest the staircase. His knock met with no response, so he softly opened the door, and the light, falling on the bed, disclosed the disheveled head of the under-housemaid, who, roused from sleep, relieved her feelings "by letting a yell," to quote her own picturesque language. The General beat a hasty retreat, his own modesty being even more offended than the housemaid's, and once more scanning the passage he saw a large pair of low shoes outside a door on the opposite side.

"I should know Stubbs's hoofmarks anywhere," he said, aloud. "This time there's no mistake," and he opened the door boldly and was walking in, when a female voice exclaimed:

"Stubbs, get up; here's the General calling you. Go your ways, General; I'll send him to you in five minutes."

Grandpapa nearly fell backward. He muttered to himself: "Stubbs, of all people!" He seemed to think—but, of course, I don't know what he seemed to think, though I felt it was time I stopped playing Peeping Tom and came to the rescue, even if I got scolded for disobedience.

"Mrs. Stubbs will make it all right, Grandpapa," I assured him. "You remember that Stubbs married the cook when we were away last Summer, don't you?"

"Of course I remember it," he said, crossly. "Why should you suppose otherwise?" and he looked searchingly at me, to make sure I was the fool that all men require unmarried females to be.

At seven the next morning we were

being whirled through the empty streets down to the Cunard wharf. A few hacks and private carriages were drawn up outside, but there was not as much excitement attendant on the arrival of the vast liner as I have often seen at one of the ferries later in the day.

The ship was already abreast of the end of the pier, but the process of docking is a slow one, and we had quite half an hour to wait. Mr. Papa de Trasque was there, seated on a pile of ropes at the very end of the wharf, and scribbling in a notebook.

"Hello!" cried Grandpapa; "what literary efforts are you busy with, and what are you here for, at any rate?"

"Waiting for Paul," the merry old gentleman answered, "and composing a short article on the object-lessons I see around me."

"Let's see," said the General, unceremoniously taking the notebook from Mr. de Trasque, and reading aloud:

"Besides the active, transitive people who are always going down to the sea in ships, there are the passive stay-at-homes, whose especial virtue seems to be in their availability to render the homecoming of the restless ones as unobjectionable as possible. It is clearly a Summer's day frolic to Brown to get Jones's house mounted for him, to pay fifty cents for the telegram that is going to rouse him out of his first sleep with the announcement that Jones's ship will be up about seven o'clock the next morning, to gallop down to the wharf at daybreak, and after kicking his heels for two hours—afraid to leave the dock long enough for even a cup of coffee—to see the vast liner slowly appearing. Of course, Jones greets him enthusiastically, and—equally, of course—it soon transpires that Mrs. Jones is too much exhausted with seasickness to wait for her luggage; so Jones takes her home in Brown's hansom, while Brown passes the luggage and pays the duties."

"Don't read the next!" cried Mr. de Trasque; "it's only abuse of the one-cent papers, which I saw all the working-people reading on my way down here."

"There's Paul!" I exclaimed, interrupting; "there, forward of the smokestack, and he is waving his hat. I believe you could make him hear you. I see no one who looks like Grandmamma," I continued, scanning the crowded deck carefully.

I never see an ocean steamer, with its thronging life, without feeling "There, but for the grace of God, is another *Bourgogne*." It stirs one's imagination to be brought face to face with even the uncombined elements of tragedy.

Grandpapa was so busy bundling me on board the moment the gangways were secured that I missed Paul, and was apparently to miss Grandmamma, too, for it was like looking for a needle in a haystack. Fifteen, twenty, twenty-five minutes passed, and she did not put in an appearance. Finally, the General discovered the number of her cabin and sent a steward with his card, and that elicited a message that the lady would be with us immediately.

I shall never forget the impression of youth in age which she made on me as she came lightly up the saloon stairway, followed by her maid. She was tall and well built, and wore her clothes with the peculiar grace that American women give to French toilettes. Her features had retained their delicacy, and her eyes were clear and very blue. Her thick white hair was carefully arranged according to the latest edict of fashion, and if her cheeks had received a little freshening, it was the only artificial thing about her. She did not gush over me. Indeed, she ignored me until she had made her greetings to Grandpapa, and then she kissed me, with kindness rather than warmth, saying simply: "I should not have known you, my dear." Several times I felt her eyes on my face, but I thought she turned away sadly. There was nothing of my mother in my features or expression, and the fact must have been a disappointment.

Grandpapa hurried her into the landau, and we were rapidly driven up town, while the maid and our foot-

man stayed behind to pass the luggage.

Wash was seated at the library window as we drew up at the house, his nose making dirty kisses wherever it flattened against the pane.

"Breakfast at once," ordered the General, as Stubbs threw open the front door, and Wash came blundering down stairs, wriggling himself into S's to mark the hospitality of his feelings.

"If she doesn't like Wash I shall not like her," I thought; but apparently she and Wash were already friends, for he was making calf-like bounds toward the staircase, his eyes fixed on her face and his tail quivering in his anxiety to conduct her to her room.

As we went to breakfast I stood aside to let the Countess precede me, and murmured something about her sitting at the head of the table if she preferred making her own coffee; but she disclaimed any fancies in that respect, and sank into a chair near the fire, in evident enjoyment of the warmth and quiet. I cannot say she stared at me—she was too well-bred for that—but certainly I felt myself undergoing a silent appraisal, which made me very sensible of my many shortcomings, as I busied myself with the cups and saucers.

My hair, which was brushed till it shone in mirror-like polish, was in strange contrast to her own fashionable coiffure, and my neatly tied stock looked hard and mannish beside the becoming outline of her delicate collar. For the first time I thought longingly of those French clothes she had said she was fetching me, and I wondered whether it was frocks or manners that worked the charm in her.

Grandpapa asked polite questions about my aunt, Lady Vincent, and Grandmamma gave an amusing sketch of her trials in adapting Oriental housekeeping to Sir John's English standards. She rather shocked my sense of the unmentionable by alluding to the pest of fleas in Constantinople, and said the Turkish

women furnished themselves with a tuft of wool at the end of a short wand, which they thrust up their sleeves or down their backs, according to the part attacked, and seldom failed to secure their assailant. Certainly, Grandmamma was not strait-laced! I breathed more freely.

Conversation turned on the events of the voyage. The Countess had crossed with a number of well-known people, and the General found, to his relief, that she was more at home among a certain set of New Yorkers than he was himself.

"I crossed," she said, "with quite a literary lion, a young Mr. de Trasque, who has been publishing some translations in verse that have been most favorably received in England. He spoke with great affection of you, General, and of Sylvia as if I should find her playing ball in the streets!" and she looked half-amused and half-inquiring.

"I like his impudence!" I said, hotly. "A grown boy who could never hit the bull's eye, nor ride straight to his fences, nor do the outside edge, nor serve a decent ball, nor drive worth a cent, nor tell the difference between a putter and a lofter—to gibe at me because I have accomplishments! I shall go to the de Trasques' the moment breakfast is over and have it out with him!"

Grandmamma glanced at the General and found him buried in his coffee cup, and then at me, but my rigid expression proclaimed the sincerity of my intentions, and being a wise woman, she held her peace; but I felt I was being kept under surveillance the rest of the day.

After luncheon, however, her plans were nearly frustrated by the General, who wished to show her the glories of his new house with all its modern appliances. It seemed absurd to insist on my being also conducted over my own home, but she was a person of resources.

"Come along, Sylvia," she said, slipping her arm through mine. "I know half the wonderful contrivances are the result of your feminine wit,

and you must explain them to me. I wish especially to see your room."

We were accordingly spun to the top of the house in the elevator, in order to begin with the servants' accommodations, the General bridleing with pride as he flashed the electric lights in every closet and opened and shut the airshaft that controlled the ventilation. He displayed the bath-rooms for the men servants and those for the women servants, while Grandmamma, her eyes sparkling with mischief, covertly drew my attention to a manufacturer's paper label pasted in the bottom of a tub and still undisturbed by water.

All over there were speaking tubes and burglar alarms and carriage calls and telephones, till you felt there was not a space left for a mouse in the walls.

Next we passed to the main bedroom floor, and here Grandpapa paused before his own door. Might not the prudery of this conventional lady take offense at being brought into such close relations with his bachelor life? Grandpapa's views about his female household were extremely Turkish. But the Countess had no such scruples. She walked boldly in, complimented him on the soldier-like simplicity of his quarters, in such marked contrast to the luxury he had provided for others, and was just returning to the passage when her eye caught a double silver frame containing photographs of my father and mother. Grandpapa explained that it had been given him by his "dear Louise" in the early days of her widowhood, and had never left his dressing table since she had placed it there with her own hands.

The tears rushed to Grandmamma's eyes; she seized the General's hand and poured out a torrent of incoherent thanks for his goodness to her child, and her admiration for his character.

I found it moving, but embarrassing, as did also my old gentleman, for while, in vulgar parlance, he looked tickled to death, he perhaps failed to rise to the occasion when,

by way of response to the lady's outburst, he asked her if she would like now to visit the kitchen. Here was my opportunity to escape. While the Countess dried her eyes I whisked into my own room and began a hasty toilette, with a view to the undoing of Paul de Trasque.

I may mention here that the visit to the kitchen was not an entire success, for while in the midst of demonstrating, by means of the poker, the perfections of his French range, Grandpapa managed to dump the cook's fire, and was glad to beat a hasty retreat before Mrs. Stubbs should return from a temporary trip to the larder.

It was on their return to the upper world that Grandmamma came upon me, booted and hatted, as she stepped from the elevator. I knew the game was up, and cursed in my heart.

"You are going out?" she said, regretfully, "and I was hoping you would spare me an hour. The trunks have come, and I am so anxious to show you your dresses!"

I made an heroic effort to yield gracefully, and even achieved a pretty acknowledgment of her generosity as I followed her into her boudoir. Both rooms looked like a dressmaker's shop; bed, chairs and sofas were covered with all that belongs to the feminine toilette. There were hats and feathers and frills and laces; there were slippers and corsets, ball dresses and street dresses, opera cloaks and furs, tissue paper and sachets—all in a glorious confusion that made my head swim.

The Countess declared my sleek head inimical to French millinery, so wrapping me in a peignoir, her maid set to work with the zest of the true artist. They were like a pair of old children dressing a doll. I was not allowed to look into the glass till the whole transformation was accomplished. First they fluffed and curled my tawny mane and piled it on top of my head, then they tried on silk stockings and embroidered slippers, then came more ribbons and laces than I had ever aspired to, and lastly

they hooked me into a creamy white house-dress, with a touch of that pale green velvet at the collar which is so becoming to people of my coloring, and then Grandmamma led me to the mirror.

I might as well admit that I was knocked all of a heap—simply flabbergasted by my own loveliness. Like Narcissus, I could not tear myself from my own reflection, and yet I was ashamed of the foolish smile of gratified vanity which overspread my face. At that moment there was a knock at the door, and a card was brought to the Countess.

"Your enemy, Paul de Trasque, is below," she said. "Will you join me in the drawing-room in a few minutes? Can't you let the personality of this pretty Sylvia be your only revenge? To refute a charge is better than to resent it." And she left me without waiting for a reply.

I am not a person much given to analysis, but I knew that in the last five minutes the status of life had changed. I had overleaped some imprisoning bars, and like Monte Cristo, was ready to exclaim, "The world is mine!" The intoxication of my own good looks gave me a sense of power and personal importance which was as new as it was exhilarating.

Slowly I trailed my long dress down the stairs, and inspired by a newly developed coquetry, I chose to enter the drawing-room through a suite of several rooms, stopping to arrange the roses in a tall vase and to adjust a lampshade—all the time deliciously conscious of Paul's wondering and admiring eyes.

"Sylvia!" he exclaimed, rushing to meet me. "Little Sylvia, grown to *this*!"

"The work of a fairy godmother," I answered, seating myself demurely close to the Countess.

Grandmamma was questioning Paul about his book with that smattering of learning which charming women so often find adequate for the purposes of general conversation.

"Is it the Vedas you have been translating?" she asked. "That first

book, the Rig Veda, seems especially dear to Oriental scholars."

"No," he answered, "it is the Puranas. They are the sacred books of legends of the inferior gods and heroes of Hindostan. Would you allow me to send you a copy of my little volume? On my word of honor, I shall never ask you if you have read it."

And while he laughingly addressed the Countess he looked at me.

"Perhaps Grandmamma will allow me to read it," I said, meekly. "I should like to see whether Sanscrit is as flexible in your rendering as in Edwin Arnold's. You know his Book of Good Counsels—the Hitopadésa? Is yours also suitable literary food for the *jeune fille*?"

Here I made a face at him when he wasn't looking. So much propriety nearly suffocated me.

"Ah, perhaps not," he answered, with a shade of annoyance in his voice. "I had forgotten the difference between milk and strong meat."

I am afraid Paul has not often found—relaxation, let us say, in the company of young girls. He seemed alternately lured and repelled by me.

Grandmamma hastened to turn the conversation into less personal channels, and we were deep in the discussion of the coming opera season when a note was brought to the Countess requiring an immediate answer. She excused herself and broke the seal.

"It is from somebody who signs herself 'Adelaide Brassey.' She hopes to call on me very soon, and begs in the meanwhile that you and I and the General will go with her to the Horse Show on Monday evening. Who is she, Sylvia? A Miss or a Mrs.?—just a friend, or is she some connection of the General's?"

"An unattached Mrs., Grandmamma, with every intention of becoming more closely connected with the General." And I went off into a little squeal of laughter at my own wit. The Countess was genuinely shocked. Little French misses are not so sophisticated, I take it. At any rate, I was quickly prevented from com-

promising myself further before Mr. de Trasque.

"Will you kindly answer this note for me, and say that you and I accept her invitation with pleasure, and that your grandfather will answer for himself when he comes in?"

I left the room, obedient and gentle, but once outside I gathered my petticoats about my knees, flew up stairs two steps at a time, and dashed off the required note in a style that did little credit to my instructress in penmanship. Having despatched it I did not return to the drawing-room, but going to a closet where my sporting things were kept, I selected a tennis racquet and a ball, and concealing them, in the folds of my dress, from the servant in attendance, I took my stand behind the portière of the dining-room door, which commanded the front hall, and there I waited developments.

Presently the sound of voices through an opening door proclaimed that Paul's visit was at an end. The servant put him into his coat, presented him with his hat, and stood respectfully offering him his cane and gloves. My young gentleman was deliberate in his actions. He settled his hat to his liking, and even glanced at himself in the mirror, when, with a crack like a pistol shot, he felt the covering wrenched from his head, while a mocking voice exclaimed:

"I play ball indoors nowadays, Paul!" and I fled for my life.

With a bound he rushed after me. Round and round the dinner table we raced, up the back stairs and down the front. I am afraid to think of the amount of openwork stocking I must have displayed in my efforts to dispose of my long-tailed finery. He was gaining on me, when, seeing that the servant had disappeared from the hall, I made a dash for the drawing-room, knowing Paul would not dare to follow me into Grandmamma's presence; but I was too late! As my hand touched the knob I felt a pair of resolute arms holding mine prisoners, while their owner, murmuring, "You know you brought it on yourself,"

deliberately kissed me on each cheek.

"I hate you!" I gasped, shaken with fury, but he only bowed and said, "Good-bye."

I burst into the room and banged the door in his face, trying in vain to compose my agitated features.

Grandmamma looked mildly surprised.

"You are breathless, dear," she said, kindly; "do you always make such haste in attending to older people's errands?"

"I ran down stairs," I answered, disingenuously, "and my frock is rather tight."

My maid, who is an indiscreet young person, told me when she was dressing me for dinner that at the servants' tea that evening, Thomas, the footman, had given it as his opinion that the Countess would have her hands full with our young lady, "'for,' says he, 'a bigger limb of Satan I never see—why, she smashed that gentleman's hat as neat as I smash this egg!'" but that Stubbs had rapped on the table and just given him what he deserved. "'Young man,' says Stubbs, 'if you want to keep your great, hulking body inside our livery,' says he, 'you had better keep your tongue between your teeth.'"

I listened to the end and then said:

"You must not repeat gossip to me from the servants' hall, Mary."

III

MRS. BRASSEY'S invitations are usually the result of somebody else having sent her a box at the opera or Horse Show, and involve carriage obligations on the part of her guests. When she got Grandpapa's acceptance she sent him his ticket, saying she knew he would prefer finding his own way down, but that she would stop for the Countess and me in her little brougham. She jobs it by the month, but it figures extensively in her conversation. The General fell easily into the trap. I was ordered to beg her to dine with us and to say we

should have the omnibus and would see that she got safely to and from the Show. I do not know of anything that shows the growing luxury of New York more than the number of these wagonettes or omnibuses for evening use. I counted twenty standing before different houses on our way down to Twenty-sixth street that evening.

Mrs. Brassey was dressed for conquest when she arrived for dinner. An enormous picture hat made of shaded yellow rose leaves, with a large black velvet bow, set off the mature charms of her face, while her exuberant figure was moulded into a dress of spangled black net over yellow silk. I had put on a white cloth costume, but catching sight, over the stairs, of Mrs. Brassey's gorgeousness as the servant removed her wrap in the hall, I rushed back to my room and with the speed of the antelope changed into a quiet dress of pale gray. I was sorry to do this, for I was anxious to be early in the drawing-room, to circumvent Mrs. Brassey, who, having once caught Grandpapa alone before dinner, makes it a rule to get to the house ages before the hour. I was also loath to take off the more becoming garment, and last of all, by going back I caught Mary trying on my jacket and light blue velvet toque before the glass, and it has undermined my confidence in that maiden. Still, no sacrifice was too great to escape having my toilette bracketed by the newspapers with that of our hostess.

Grandmamma must have been horrified at the lady's get-up, for when I came into the room she seemed relieved and said, "How nice you look!"

At the Garden Grandmamma put her hand through my arm, for the crowd was great and she feared we might be separated, while Mrs. Brassey seized the General with that air of proprietorship which so many ladies assume toward the men they are courting. I am sure Grandpapa was thinking what a monstrous fine woman she was, for he conducted her to her box as if she were the Empress of all the Russias. The Countess and I followed

meekly. This was no easy matter, for the second class—ladies' saddle horses—had just been called, and people were pressing toward the rails. Grandmamma clung to me closely, more, I could see, as a protection to herself than to me, for the scene confused and slightly disgusted her. Her little aristocratic nose was held high, and her nostrils quivered as we forced our way through a solid mass of mixed humanity. There were horsey men and painted ladies, newspaper reporters and officials of the Show, dress-makers and milliners come to see their own and one another's creations that decked the bodies and heads of the women in the boxes. Here and there some well-known man was conveying his party of overdressed females to their places, a small contingent of black coats following, and swaying round them the great mass of the boarding-house public, to whom their faces and names were as familiar as a close attention to the society columns of the papers could make them. To add to the confusion, little boys in the orange-and-black colors of the Association, with striped jackets and jockey caps, were hawking programs. "Here you are—catalogue, catalogue! All the horses, and full list of the box-holders!" While from the topmost gallery the band was vainly trying to make itself heard above the din.

The plainness of the amphitheatre was partly concealed by hangings of orange-and-black drapery, but no decorations can cover its baldness or blind one to the fact that, while eminently suitable for the exhibition of horses, bicycles and prize-fighters, it is no fitting background for the display of the richest toilettes and jewels of the ladies of New York.

We were shown into a box on the second tier, admirably situated for both seeing and being seen, and Mrs. Brassey marshaled Grandmamma and me to the front seats while she retained the General next to her. She looked the priestess of the Show, in her yellow and black finery, and I felt the chance of escaping newspaper no-

toriety the next morning was infinitesimal.

I surveyed the moving crowd with interest, wondering how soon I should see someone I knew. One thing I hoped and prayed, and that was that Paul de Trasque would not come to speak to us. I was overcome with shame when a night's sleep had brought reflection, and I felt that my conduct had more than justified his estimate of my semi-savage breeding. My fine clothes and fine manners had been the thinnest veneer. I was a hoyden—that was the only word to describe me—but then, was that any excuse for his being a beast? To be kissed by force was an insult no woman could ever forgive. But here Grandmamma interrupted my thoughts.

"Do the people come here to see the celebrities or the horses?" she asked. "See how they are surging round that box opposite."

"It is Sally Van Boskirk," I exclaimed. "She is just back from her honeymoon, and she is everything the public loves: rich, titled and a bride. You remember hearing about her wedding, surely? I used to be her dearest friend, but Grandpapa refused to let me be her bridesmaid, because he disapproved of the match, and there has been a coolness ever since. I have no women friends now," I added, sadly.

"Poor little Sylvia!" Grandmamma said, with real feeling.

I am beginning to like the Countess. She has a sense of humor and she is not prudish, and she understands things in a way the General and Bobby never could.

Sally focused me with her opera-glass, and in a few moments Lord Dumpty came to beg that I might return with him for a moment to her box, as her party had not yet arrived and she was alone. Grandmamma at once consented (glad, I am sure, to assist in the reëstablishment of my only friendship), and promised to send Grandpapa for me in fifteen minutes. Sally was in white cloth embroidered in gold, with a hat and muff

of pale yellow double hollyhock. Her little gentle face was almost snuffed out by so much finery. I thought she looked rather pathetic, and when I asked her how soon she meant to sail for England, the tears started to her eyes. Well, she has bought her title dear. Lord Dumpty has much the expression and shape of a flat-billed duck, and a dissipated duck, too, I fear.

Later, when I returned to our box I found Mrs. Brassey talking, with a vast amount of noise and gesticulation, to a rather bold-looking foreigner. He whispered to her as I passed to my chair, and she introduced him.

"Sylvia, Signor Badini wishes to be presented to you. His artistic soul is held entranced in the meshes of your red hair."

I bowed coldly. The bad taste and impertinence of her introduction made me feel like slapping her.

The inconsistency of men! Here is Grandpapa, with his rigid ideas of female delicacy, separating me from Sally—a true lady at heart, if her father did make his money in oil—and constantly throwing me with this coarse, loud-voiced woman. Grandmamma came to my rescue. She changed her seat, so as to make it impossible for Signor Badini to enter into conversation with me, and the next moment she made a place between us for Paul de Trasque.

I was covered with confusion. He affected not to know what to do with his hat.

"Mme. de Treville, may I beg your indulgence?" he asked, putting it down close to her chair. "Sylvia is too frolicsome to be trusted with the last remaining English hat of any gentleman. I sacrificed one last week to an indiscretion."

I had grown fiery red.

"How dare you look me in the face!" I said, in an angry whisper.

"I find your face prettier than your manners," he answered, laughing.

"You are no gentleman!" I retorted.

"I should have been no *man*, which is worse, if I had let you shy balls at

me with impunity. Little ladies with such free hands must expect their faces to pay the penalty. Let us cry quits, Sylvia. I refuse to apologize."

I turned an indignant shoulder toward him, and yet in my heart I felt relieved. He seemed anxious to be good friends, and I knew my humiliating secret was safe with him. He was not a person to kiss and tell.

He laid himself out to amuse Grand-mamma, and listening to his entrancing voice, I almost forgot his misdeeds.

In a pause in the conversation I heard Mrs. Brassey say to Badini:

"Why didn't you bring your wife to America?"

"My fairest lady," he answered, "why remind me of my disabilities?"

"What do you mean?" she said, scenting a compliment.

"That my heart and my brush can be only at your service," he replied. "I must have you on canvas—I shall paint you as *Carmen*. You will be truly magnificent!"

Fool! she couldn't see he was laughing at her. I contrasted her stupid face and over-developed figure with Chartran's lovely, smiling picture of Calvé in the same rôle. Truly, if any artist wishes fame he can quickly find it in the vanity of woman.

"I am afraid you artists are sad flatterers," she said, bridling with gratification. "Now, if you had asked to paint Miss Stirling I should not have wondered—but, of course, a more mature expression might be preferred."

"I should be only too happy if I might venture to entreat Miss Stirling—" he began.

But here she interrupted, and beyond the words, "some other time," "General Stirling," "anything I say," I heard nothing more, for the hurdles were being put up, the bugler was blowing a series of blasts on his instrument, the "green hunters" were filing into the ring, and on the back of the greenest of them I knew I should see Bobby. Sure enough, there he was, with a number 9 as big as a battle-shield on his back, and his

riding boots of the most beautiful polish. They must have been his English ones!

"He won't get anything, you know," I said to Paul, forgetting, in the excitement of the moment, my resentment. "Isn't it a pity? That mare won't jump, with all this light and noise and confusion. I told him so."

"Won't he even get over his fences?" inquired Paul, frivolously.

I was offended for Bobby.

"Of course he will," said I. "If it depended on good horsemanship Bobby would be certain to win—certain. But, unfortunately, it does not, and, as I tell you, the mare won't jump well here."

And she did not. Twice she refused utterly to have anything to do with the obstacle—once stopping short with her nose against the bar in a way that would have unseated most people—as I pointed out to Paul—and the second time bolting against the wings so violently that she sent the attendant grooms flying. The third time Bobby got her over, but she knocked down a rail, and after bucking round half the ring came to a full stop before the next fence and repeated her former maneuvers. Again Bobby got her over, and she took the rest of the jumps creditably enough, but the horses against her were too good, and I saw her ruled out, with feelings of sincere regret tempered only by the remembrance of my prophetic warnings.

"Well, he did his best," said Paul.

"And nobody could have done better," I answered, hotly. "Certainly you could not."

"No," he returned, laughing, "though I'm pretty good on my own legs, am I not, Miss Stirling?"

Before the evening was over Grand-papa had introduced a number of his friends, both old and young, to Grand-mamma and me, and I must confess to finding it lots of fun.

Coming home we discussed a series of entertainments the Countess suggested as advisable, and I was annoyed to find Mrs. Brassey entering

into the conversation with the intimacy of a near relation.

"Don't try to mix the smart people and the old families," she said; "if you do, you won't get the smart ones a second time."

"Then let them stay away," the General burst out, "and be damned to them!" I think I heard him mutter as he got out to escort Mrs. Brassey up her own steps.

Grandmamma is so admirably wise about holding her tongue. I wish I could emulate her.

"I find Mrs. Brassey essentially vulgar," I said as Grandpapa returned.

"It is a particularly happy time to give voice to your sentiments, when you have just accepted her hospitality," he said, sarcastically.

He can jump on me till I'm black and blue, if only he won't marry her. If he does I declare I will go back with Grandmamma and become a model of French propriety. She really is an old dear, and I overheard something a week or two after we had been to the Horse Show which made me think her an old sport, too, only she would be shocked at such language applied to herself.

I had been for a short walk, and as I returned I met the postman on the steps and took the letters from him. One was for Grandmamma from Aunt Adèle, whose handwriting was now very familiar. Knowing the pleasure these letters brought, I ran to the door of her sitting-room, which stood half-open, and was going in when I heard a voice, presumably that of her lawyer, saying:

"Madam, if you make Lady Vincent this yearly allowance you will leave yourself exactly one hundred dollars a month. The property is depreciating; it will yield no more."

"It is sufficient for my needs," she said with dignity, and I turned away, ashamed to have heard so much, but I could not dismiss it from my mind. Here was this generous old lady giving to Lady Vincent, giving several thousand dollars' worth of clothes to me, and she herself content with a pittance, while Grandpapa and I were

so disgustingly rich. Something could surely be done. I determined to confide in Grandpapa. I made my plans to ride with him the next day, and as we trotted side by side in the mild December sunshine I told him my trouble. He seemed greatly distressed, but professed himself unable to think of any way in which we could come to the rescue without meeting with a rebuff.

"I had supposed her well off," he said. "She must have been using up her capital. Had I known it at the time of your mother's death I might have arranged it in a legacy, but now it all rests with you. Make her love you well enough to share your income."

Why are people so proud about money? They are willing to accept your time and service and sympathy—things beyond price—and yet when you offer to share your superfluities with them they stand proudly aloof. I believe that when the world is a little older we shall find out that *proper pride* is a mischievous phrase, and reasonable humility will be the proof of a healthy mind.

I watched Grandmamma narrowly to see whether she seemed careworn or unhappy; but, on the contrary, she was apparently absorbed in my affairs. There was something very gallant in the way she concealed her troubles from those nearest to her; but while I admired it I felt a trifle chilled. "Make her love you," the General had said, but somehow I felt the task was not so simple as he imagined. I was already on the way to love her, but as yet I could see she considered me only in the light of an interesting study. I was not the child of her affections. However, I did not despair, and even my most carping critic, Bobby, admits that I can be pleasant when I like.

Bobby does not care for the Countess. He holds her responsible for my emancipation from his companionship, which is perfectly absurd. How can I keep late hours at balls and dances, and go to the opera and to dinners, and do all the hateful teas

and visits, and yet be ready to skate and ride with Bobby whenever he chooses to play hookey from college? Besides, I suddenly find myself years older than he is, and I resent his turning sulky when I say so. He affects to think me delicate, the victim of a mistaken system subjecting young females of the upper classes to social dissipations in the way of late hours and excitements most prejudicial to the race.

It was, therefore, no surprise to me to find him one day seated in solemn session with the Countess, enlightening her on the probable results of the course I was pursuing. As Lady Dumpty had come to see me, I was unable to take an active part in the conversation that floated to me across the drawing-room, amusing and annoying me at the same time.

"You know, Countess," Bobby was saying, "I can't approve of it. When I had charge of Syl she was in first-class condition." Here he cast a glance at me over his shoulder and muttered, "She knows I'm talking about her!" Then he went on: "She could skate all the morning and ride all the afternoon without turning a hair; but look at her now! How she has gone off!"

He said it with so much vehemence that Grandmamma, quite startled, ejaculated, "Where?" and turned involuntarily to see whether I had left the room.

"Manners are not everything," he resumed.

The Countess was a good deal mystified, but answered, under the impression that she was agreeing:

"No, no; of course, morals——"

"*Muscle*, I mean," Bobby corrected. "Now, honestly, isn't she getting a bit soft?"

My poor grandmother, who longed to see me gentler, began:

"But surely, Mr. de Trasque, a softening influence——"

"*Influence!*" Bobby shouted. "It's diet and lack of exercise. Now, mind you, I don't approve of training people down too fine, but I'm afraid she's lost a lot lately."

"I dare say," the Countess assented; "she is very careless."

"A lot of training, I mean," he condescended to explain.

"I see nothing amiss with Sylvia," she answered, beginning to be amused by his odd, abrupt ways. "I find her very well trained and sweet."

"I'm afraid you don't catch on to what I mean, Countess," said Bobby, desperately. "She sits up late and doesn't get up in the morning, and she doesn't walk regularly or ride regularly, or do anything regularly, but just eat her head off at banquets and shake her heels on polished floors. No girl could stand that sort of thing long without going all to pieces, and though Syl's hardly got at it yet, she's beginning to show the effects. Why, I don't believe that if she hit me now she could make me feel it, and last month I almost staggered, I can tell you, when she planted a good left-hander. But perhaps it's those tight sleeves that make her arms look so thin. You haven't felt her muscle lately, I suppose?"

But here I was obliged to break out, in spite of the exciting description Sally was giving me of a rather naughty play she had been to see the night before.

"I'm not thin!" I cried, "and I'll box with you to-morrow, if you like, just to show you how little I've gone off. The idea!"

"I'm not addressing you!" said Bobby. "I'm not pleased with you, but for your own good I just thought I'd ask the Countess to keep an eye on you while I'm at college," and he sulkily took himself away.

The result of Bobby's mission was that I did try to get more exercise, riding when I could with Grandpapa and walking twice a day. I could see the Countess felt uneasy at my taking my walk unattended save by Wash, but the General laughed at her foreign ideas, and gave thanks that as yet a modest female could be respected in the thoroughfares of New York. I have said before that Grandmamma never made points.

She went for a drive with the Gen-

eral the afternoon I have in mind, and I watched them start off together in a truly conjugal fashion. The General's attentions to her are so punctilious, so full of old-time gallantry. The footman was not allowed to tuck the fur robe round her; Grandpapa did it himself and settled a cushion at her back, and he always looks at her as if she were a mixture of queen and angel, queen predominating.

After they were gone I answered some notes, and finding the hour much later than I had supposed, I dressed quickly for my walk and whistled for Wash. On the doorstep I ran into Mrs. Brassey, just alighted from her brougham.

"Anyone in, Sylvia?"

"The servants, Mrs. Brassey."

"Grandpa and Grandma both out?"

"My grandfather and Mme. de Treville are, as usual, driving together."

This I knew would be gall and wormwood.

"Rather an exposure for an old lady, is it not?" she sneered.

"Did you find it cold?" I asked, with affected concern. "Let me lend you a wrap."

"How absurd!" she exclaimed.

"Why should I be cold? You will have to come in with me," leading the way through the open door up stairs to the library, while Wash and I unwillingly trailed after her; "I want an invitation for Badini for your dance on the twenty-second."

I assured her that our list was full and that I could not possibly give it, unless we should have some more refusals, but she answered:

"Stuff and nonsense, Sylvia! You will give it to me here and now, or I shall get it from the General."

Abominable creature! I shall murder her some day!

"Give me his address, if you please," I said, disagreeably, meaning to consult Grandmamma before sending it.

"Never mind his address," she retorted, "I'll attend to that," and as ill luck would have it, her eye lit on a pile of invitations that had just been

sent home to fill a fresh order. She was about to help herself, but I interposed.

"Pardon me," I said, "but I am responsible for these invitations to my—" I was going to say "grandmother," but remembering she was only a visitor, I substituted "grandfather."

Mrs. Brassey burst into a coquettish laugh.

"You think he would be likely to refuse me a card? Ah, little Sylvia, I am afraid the wish was father to the thought; but luckily the General and I understand each other, so I shall take *two*. Tell your grandfather I shall leave his card with Badini's invitation. I have plenty at home, and foreigners are particular about being politely treated."

"I should advise you to let the General choose his own guests," I said. "This one seems to me most undesirable."

"You are hardly civil, my dear," she said, pleasantly, "but I shall not tell tales of you. Good-bye." And off she marched with her spoils.

She would let me tramp on her rather than quarrel with me, she is so afraid of losing the entrée of the house. I know she hates me, and if Grandpapa ever marries her I am heaping up wrath for myself. If the Countess had only been home she would have put our bumptious lady in her place, for Mrs. Brassey shows the discomfort in Grandmamma's presence which second-rate people always feel when brought face to face with good breeding.

Wash had been turning great, pleading eyes on me all through the visit; it was bitter to him to be disappointed in a walk.

"Best of dogs," I said, caressingly, "she has wasted our daylight, but we can do a few blocks," and we started up the Avenue along the low wall that bounds the Park.

It was a typical New York twilight; the sun had just set, but the sky was still glowing in reds and purples through the leafless trees. There was a slight haze in the atmos-

phere which made the tall buildings look stately and mysterious in the fading light, so that one could almost fancy one's self in a foreign city. The crudity of our town was slightly veiled.

I wished to cover as much ground as possible while the sunset still glowed, but found my patience sorely tried by Wash. He lagged and ran into areaways and blundered along in the purposeless manner peculiar to bulldogs. He always attracted attention, and I was accustomed to hearing him described by passing admirers as "a genuine fighter," with the accent on the *ine*, or "a real English bull," and groups of workmen would stand watching till he was out of sight.

I had passed Eighty-fifth street when I met an empty huckster's cart, drawn by a broken-down horse and driven by a half-grown boy, while beside him on the seat was a man of most forbidding appearance. Wash was trotting about two lengths behind me, and the boy pulled up to look at him. About a block further on I was astonished to see the same cart keeping pace with me on the far side of the street, the man and the boy still staring at the dog. It was so nearly dusk that I resolved to go home, and whistling to Wash, who had run on ahead, I turned my face southward. In a few moments I heard a growl and a scuffle, and looking round I saw, about half a block behind me, the cart drawn up to the curbstone and the villainous-looking man in the act of lifting Wash into the cart. By means of a thick stick slipped under his collar the dog was choked into helplessness and the whole thing was accomplished with great skill and expedition. The horse was lashed into a gallop and was abreast of where I stood before I had time to collect my thoughts; but Bobby's training had not been thrown away. I put on my best spurt of speed, dashed down the Avenue calling "Stop thief!" and overtaking the cart, which had got blocked behind an omnibus, I succeeded in getting my hands on the tailboard.

The man who held Wash struck at me repeatedly, but he had only his left hand free, and his aim was uncertain, owing to Wash's struggles and the rocking of the cart, so that I dodged his blows with little difficulty. Finding it impossible to reach me with his fists, he made his companion hand over the whip, and began slashing my head and shoulders, while I shouted "Help!" and "Police!" and at last saw a bicycle policeman coming to my assistance. Before he reached me, however, a man dashed from the sidewalk to the horse's head, and as soon as he had checked its speed, sprang into the cart and wrenched the whip from the huckster's hand. The officer now came up, and the arrest was made, while I, sick with the pain of the blows I had received, breathless and frightened, found myself sobbing on Paul de Trasque's shoulder.

That young gentleman entreated a second policeman, who had now joined us, to call a hansom, for a fine crowd had collected, and his one idea was to get me away. The policeman demurred.

"Did you see the man steal the dog, sir?" he asked. "Because, if you did not, the lady will have to go to the station-house to make the charge, or else we can't lock these fellows up."

The Stirling blood was up in a moment. I wiped my eyes, forced back the sobs, and as no hansom happened by, I followed the policeman's suggestion and joined Wash and the prisoners in the cart, which was now driven by that guardian of the public peace. Paul and the bicycle policeman brought up the rear; and so the whole party moved to the halls of justice.

The charge was made and the two committed, and I agreed to appear in court the next morning. Meanwhile, Paul had telephoned to his nearest club for a cab, which rattled up as he and Wash and I came out of the station-house.

The manners of that dog are so primitive! Not only does he consider himself privileged to be the first to enter any opened door, but having

entered, he always seats himself where you must, perforce, fall over him. On this occasion he bounded headlong into the cab and then filled up the doorway, while he invited me, with wheedling wiggles, to accompany him.

For the first time my attention turned to Paul. Here was my rescuer, who had not been thanked—my enemy, who had proved a friend in need and in deed. It is true I had sobbed on his shoulder, but only because he had happened to be in closer proximity than the policeman. It was human, not individual, support I had craved! Since that moment I had been absorbed in the details of formulating a charge against Wash's abductors.

"Before I say good-bye," I began, "let me thank——"

"You can thank me in the cab," he interrupted, hauling out Wash with small ceremony while he helped me in. He placed himself by my side and allowed my insulted quadruped to bestow his dignity as best he could on the floor at our feet. "I shall not lose sight of you again till I have seen you safely inside your own door," he said, resolutely; and then, after a moment, added: "You are a plucky woman, Sylvia! The way you stuck to the cart while that brute was lashing you with his whip was superb. I can't tell you how much I admire your whole behavior! He must have hurt you abominably!"

I waived the question of my black and blue shoulders and began again my interrupted acknowledgments of his timely rescue, but he stopped me.

"It was just a happy chance that led me to take my walk up the Avenue instead of down, and brought me to the spot in time to be of service to you. But, on second thought, I do not believe it was chance. It was fate! We are destined to be friends. Can't you forgive my nonsense of last month? Look at me, Sylvia—I am really sorry. I apologize. I am your admiring slave, your subject; and in token of my sincerity, I do not even ask to shake hands as a proof of

your forgiveness, for fear you may accuse me in your heart of taking advantage of the situation." And, man-like, he held out his hand while professing to dread that I might misunderstand such a conventional familiarity. Without hesitation I placed mine in it, and did not even resent its being raised to his lips.

"Dear little Sylvia," he exclaimed, "we are once more friends, the best and the oldest. And we shall never quarrel again, even if your next caprice is to knock my heart into a cocked hat." And though he laughed, his voice was not quite as steady as usual.

Then we reached home, and I made Paul come in to give me his moral support under the reproaches which I knew would be hurled at me for my twilight wanderings.

Grandpapa and Grandmamma were at tea, and looking so pleased with themselves and their surroundings that I hated to explode my bomb. The General, however, bore it like a man.

"You did exactly right! It just shows what it is to give a woman a sensible bringing up. I am proud of you, Sylvia, and I shall go myself with you to court in the morning."

But Grandmamma was horrified. She said the men might go unpunished for aught she cared. We had the dog, and they would have a night in jail; and why subject a young girl to painful and improper sights in a police court? Of course, it stood quite outside of her experience—such a thing could not have happened to a young woman of my position in France, for she would never be permitted to walk unattended, above all at such an hour of the day, and she ventured to hope the General would now see that her conventional ideas were not overstrained.

It was the first time I had ever heard the Countess express her opinions with force since she had been in the house, and I wondered how my old gentleman would stand being reproached, however mildly. But she appeared to attract him quite as

much cross as pleasant, for he hastened to declare himself a convert to any system, French or American, that would make me as charming a woman as my grandmother, while he emphasized the compliment by a most gallant bow. I noticed, all the same, that he ordered breakfast at eight o'clock the next morning and reminded me on no account to be late.

The court-room presented the usual varieties of squalid vice and its attendant miseries. The magistrate had just arrived as Grandpapa and I took our seats, and the court was called to order. The prisoners were waiting in their cells. The witnesses were placed in rows along the room—women with disfigured faces, ready to testify in favor of the husbands who had beaten them; children, dragged along by weeping mothers; a fashionably dressed young man waiting to pay the fine of a friend, whose disordered evening dress and bloodshot eyes made him a truly disgusting object.

I had often before been brought face to face with poverty, but never with vice, and here they seemed to go hand in hand. To flaunt my pampered, sheltered existence before these poor creatures seemed little short of a crime. My conscience cried, "Who made thee to differ?" till I felt ready to throw myself at the feet of the Tombs Angel and beg her to let me share her work. I looked at Grandpapa to see whether he experienced the same excitement, but he was immersed in his morning paper and didn't care a rap for our surroundings. The magistrate was briskly sorting papers, and he also seemed strangely indifferent. I recalled a picture by Gérôme, called, I think, "The Sermon." A congregation of monks in the choir stalls of their chapel, dozing, whispering, sunk in apathy, while one novice, with the wistful, far-away look of the religious enthusiast, was drinking in every word, to refresh his thirsty soul. I was in the midst of drawing a sentimental parallel between myself and the hollow-eyed young monk, when I

was brought back to reality by hearing O'Brien's name called, and almost at once I was asked to take the witness stand.

The required oath was administered, and finding more voice than I expected, I told my story in few words. The case was so plainly against the prisoner that the judge asked him, simply as a matter of form, what he had to say in his defense, and was surprised to see him rise and prepare to reply.

"It's all a mistake, your honor. I never meant to steal no dog; but I thought he was lost, your honor—on my soul, I did!—and says I to my son, 'We better save the English bull from drownin' in the pound,' says I, 'till his master advertises for him.' Then when the lady caught a holt on my cart I tried to push her off, 'cos I was afraid the dog would bite her, he was that savage."

The justice's only comment on O'Brien's exposition of his virtuous intentions toward Wash and me was to commit him to await the action of the Grand Jury, and he was led off, casting a malignant scowl at me.

The son escaped punishment. He seemed to have taken no part in the theft beyond driving, under his father's directions, and his plea to be allowed to go home to look after his sick mother won the sympathies of the magistrate.

I left the police court with a silent conviction that the care of O'Brien's family should justly devolve upon me, since at my instigation their breadwinner had been locked up. Not that I felt exactly called on to drive the huckster's cart, nor yet to adopt dog-stealing as a profession, but something ought to be done for the sick woman, only I did not quite see my way to setting about it. Grandpapa had a tender heart, but I knew by instinct it would not set toward smoothing the way for transgressors, and as for Grandmamma, she looked on the whole transaction with horror. A vision of Stubbs presenting my alms on a salver flitted through my

brain. And then, with a pleasant thrill, I remembered that Paul had promised to be my friend, and I made up my mind to ask his help the very next time I should see him quite alone.

IV

LIKE most private houses, ours was not of a size to take in all the people we desired to entertain at once, so Grandmamma determined to give three dances. In making her selections she may have been slightly guided by the intimacies of those invited, but in her own judgment she had no intention of honoring one guest above another. If she considered anyone undesirable it was the result of personal unfitness in manners and conduct, and not a question of social setting. The fact that the first dance embraced chiefly young married people arose from the Countess's dislike of asking young girls without their chaperons, and reserving the pleasant mixture of old and young for the subsequent dances. She was, therefore, far from pleased when Mrs. Brassey enlightened her as to how the social world was grading the value of her invitations.

"They say," explained that astute lady, "that your first dance is the only one anybody cares to be asked to; that you have made a clean sweep of the 'multis,' and as for your favors, that the General has told you to give every woman a piece of jewelry that will not shame the rest of her trinkets. Some say you brought out bracelets and chains and pins from Paris, and others say that Frost & Snow have been running their factory day and night to turn out the required number of such articles. Nearly all who are not asked say they shall look on an invitation to the later dances as an insult, and those who are asked declare that cart ropes would not keep them at home. Splendid, isn't it?" she wound up. "Just the sort of boom Sylvia ought to have. Make her smart and exclusive, and everyone will run after her."

Grandmamma looked at her with loathing. I believe hers was the very only invitation my dear old aristocrat had begrudged.

"I trust you are mistaken," she said, coldly. "Our friends can scarcely have formed so low an estimate of our hospitality. In regard to the cotillion favors, even if General Stirling's bank account permitted him to treat his friends with such munificence, I am sure his taste would forbid rank vulgarity," and pleading an engagement, she gathered up her knitting and left Mrs. Brassey with me.

If she hoped to insult that lady she little appreciated the thickness of her skin.

"Grandma was annoyed, wasn't she, to find how easily the public sees through her little ruse?" Here she consulted her watch. "Can you spare me a few moments? I am glad to see you alone; perhaps you can suggest to me something Grandpa wants for Christmas."

"From you, Mrs. Brassey?"

"From me," with a conscious blush. I affected to think.

"The housemaid broke his shaving cup this morning. What would you think of giving him a china one with the legend, 'Love the giver?'"

"How childish you are!" she said, querulously, but without noticing the impertinence. "Seriously, cannot you advise me?"

"A scarf-pin," I answered. "I cannot imagine a more fitting present from you than a cat's-eye set in brass."

"Sylvia," she said, stung at last to resentment, "I shall certainly mention your rudeness to your grandfather!" She flung out of the room with her back hunched, but she will be fawning on me in a week.

Our dance was on the twentieth of December, near enough to Christmas for the decorations to be in harmony with the season. The day had been a trying one. It was extremely cold, and it seemed to me the front door was never shut. Most of the furniture had been sent away to make space for

dancing, and the house had been in the hands of an army of florists since the early morning. They had every reason to be proud of their work, for the effect of the red and green was enchanting. Poincetta was massed among the greenery so lavishly that I doubt whether there was a single scarlet star left in the town.

We had our luncheon as usual, but Grandmamma yielded to Stubbs's tearful entreaty that he might have the dining-room early, and she and I had dinner served in her boudoir, while Grandpapa was sent to the club. He had suddenly become interested in the expected guests. The invitations had been out for three weeks, but it was only when the magnitude of the preparations dazzled his imagination that he began to wish his friends to enjoy the glory. He had the list submitted to him, exclaimed indignantly that half of his oldest friends had been omitted, and before Grandmamma and I could explain that it was but the first of a series of entertainments, and intended to embrace only young married people and a few extra men, he was half-way to his club, exploding with outraged hospitality.

Later in the evening Mr. de Trasque, who had been in the reading-room at the time, told me what had occurred. The General joined a group of his especial cronies, and explained that he was having a Christmas frolic for me. While he did not mention the word Christmas-tree, the impression was conveyed that anyone who enjoyed seeing innocent recreation would find it by simply looking on at my gambols with my young friends—and that was honestly his attitude to all people under forty.

"Room for all!" he exclaimed. "Brown, old fellow, bring Mrs. Brown, and Smith, wouldn't your daughters enjoy a dance? Mme. de Treville is a stranger here, and does not understand our ways, but she and Sylvia will feel honored if you will come," and having asked half the club, he returned about ten o'clock, restored to good humor.

When I followed Grandmamma down stairs an hour later we found the General ordering fires lighted in all the rooms where we had been struggling all day to keep the temperature low.

"Cold as a barn," he complained. "That comes of getting in outside servants who do not understand their business. You will have the whole company dying of pneumonia to-morrow."

The Countess interposed, and he was finally headed off in the matter of fires, but his activity soon found a new vent.

"Where are all the comfortable chairs?" he asked, indignantly. "There will be older people here to-night, who can't sit on those trestle-work things," pointing to the camp chairs for the cotillion. "Why, my friend Brown would cover two and then break through!" and he disappeared, to return followed by a line of servants carrying armchairs from the library, each of which was planted exactly where it would most congest a crowded room. I should like here to throw in the remark that I know of no object that so aptly illustrates the Psalmist's descriptive words, "A proud look and a high stomach," as an upholstered chair set in isolated grandeur.

I was about to remonstrate, but Grandmamma shook her head—she always yielded so gracefully to the inevitable. She declared he was quite right, and that for the early part of the evening the chairs would not interfere with the dancing, and might contribute to the comfort of our friends. She had hardly ceased speaking when Mr. and Mrs. Brown were announced.

Mrs. Brown was a gentle old lady of seventy, dressed in the primmest of black velvet frocks, who subsided into a corner and seemed likely to give little trouble, but as the General's friends continued to arrive in parties of twos and threes, each more portly than the last, the Countess began to be uneasy about room and supper.

The fashionable contingent were late in coming, and were as likely to

mix with the General's impromptu party as oil with water, but the Countess's charm of manner was equal to even that demand upon it, and every guest felt that he was the object of her especial care.

Lady Dumpty and her expensive purchase—I allude to George Algeron Frederick Patrick Green-Shamrock—were among the last comers, and I thought His Lordship had been dining, though I believe it is not *comme il faut* for persons of my age and sex to note any difference between sense and imbecility. At all events, it was not long before he planted a capering British heel on Mrs. Manhattan's ancestral lace, and in his efforts to kick himself free measured his length on the parquet. Still, that might happen to the best behaved; the moral being for the possessors of priceless lace to mount it higher than the edge of the skirt.

Mrs. Brassey, in red satin, with poppies rambling over the undulations of her person, was sweeping through the rooms on Grandpapa's arm, stopping now and then to admire a picture or tapestry with that air of proprietorship which always exasperated me, and the General, who was more than ready to descant on the perfections of his new house, really had the manner of one who invites the lady of his choice to make suggestions about her future home. What he was actually saying I could swear to without hearing.

"It's all Black's taste—you know he built this house. He picked up all these things for me in Holland last Summer. What a charming man he is! His ideas demand a pretty long purse, but you would spend twice the money for the sake of his good company." Perhaps those were not exactly the words, but I am sure it was a panegyric on that prince of good fellows, Thomas Black!

It was almost twelve o'clock when I was released from Grandmamma's side, and to my chagrin Badini claimed my first waltz. The man gives me cold shivers, and yet I know nothing to his disadvantage except

the freedom of his manners with Mrs. Brassey, and surely that is not surprising. At the end of the waltz I found Bobby de Trasque at my elbow.

"Syl," he exclaimed, "you look stunning to-night! I never thought you a good-looking girl before."

"You should not flatter so grossly, Bobby," I answered, laughing.

"Come for a moment into the conservatory," he said. "I have something to say to you. Perhaps you think I have been grumpy lately? Well, I have. I can't settle to a blessed thing, and it's all worry about you. It makes me mad to see those jays fluttering about you, just because you're rich."

"Perhaps some of them share your opinion that I am a good-looking girl," I said, keeping my face straight.

"Now don't get brash just because I paid you a compliment," he said, severely. "It ain't your looks—it's your money." Then, with a blush, he added: "But I don't like you for that, Syl—I really believe I'm in love with you! There, now! You know the truth, and you can have me if you like."

"Dear Bobby," I answered, as gently as I could, for I was really touched, "I am certainly not rich enough to do without your affection, but if I am to understand that you are proposing to make me Mrs. Robert de Trasque some six or eight years hence, don't you think the invitation a trifle premature?"

"That's right," he returned, bitterly; "snub a fellow when he humbles himself to you, and be frivolous! Just like a woman!"

"Don't be unjust, Bobby," I answered. "I am not snubbing you, but I don't want to be made love to. You must know I can't feel toward you in *that* way."

"Perhaps you wouldn't answer Paul so flippantly," he sneered.

Then I grew angry. He had no business to drag in Paul's name.

"It is easy enough to be serious," I responded, with my cheeks aflame. "I utterly and entirely decline your

proposal—and now, please, we will return to the ballroom.”

I had to go alone, however; Bobby remained rooted to the spot. That his docile pupil, his admiring companion, should have turned on him in this way was past belief. As I returned I heard him mutter:

“I’ll leave Columbia and try for Harvard at once, and when I am gone perhaps I may be missed.”

If he had known his Shakespeare better he might have exclaimed, with the *Friar*:

That what we have we prize not to the
worth
Whiles we enjoy it; but being lacked and
lost,
Why, then we rack the value, then we
find
The virtue that possession would not
show us
Whiles it was ours. So will it fare with
Sylvia.

And just so it is *not* going to fare with me. Bobby in the rôle of a lover is so painfully inconsistent with my lifelong relations to him that I shall hail his departure with inward joy and trust that he may return to us with more sense and less sentiment.

The Countess could hardly persuade the General that his duty required him to escort a most distinguished stranger to supper, so anxious was he not to overlook the retiring Mrs. Brown, and soon after, when the cotillion began, he was seen bearing off favors by the handful to bestow on Miss Smith, who was leaving, or sending presents of them to all the little Joneses by their homeward-bound papa.

The evening was almost over before I had any chance to talk with Paul. We had had a few waltzes together, but I am not one of those women who can float on air to dance music while their lips pour a flood of conversation into the tenderly inclined ear of their partner. When I dance, I dance, and I never stop till I cannot draw another breath, and as soon as I recover wind I’m off again. I hate mixing amuse-

ments! But finally I had enough of dancing, and I was glad to accede to Paul’s suggestion that we should leave the ballroom and have a quiet chat, and we found a comfortable sofa under a bower of great palms, so secluded that it defied the eye of the most experienced chaperon. By the bye, I wonder how Paul knew so well just where to find a sequestered nook. If I thought he and Mrs. Manhattan—but I have no right to pry into his affairs; if he likes to be attentive to such a minx, he may! At any rate, someone has trained him in very pretty *soigné* ways. He knows just the angle to hold a cushion when you sink into it, and a foot-stool flew from under the sofa as if by magic. Decidedly, he had been there before during the evening; but why not? Unsophisticated love-making is very crude. If I ever should surrender my heart it would be to a past master in the art.

He began paying me the usual compliments which most decent-looking girls receive when they have been the belles of their own balls, and I listened wearily. Bobby had made it very plain as to why I was a success, and I did not want Paul to make it any plainer. Gratified vanity is exceedingly exhilarating, but one is ashamed of even such transient elation when the reason for one’s popularity is brought down to dollars and cents. I do not mean that I thought Paul valued me for my setting, but I feared he knew that most people did, as long as Bobby had said so, and I coveted sincerity. Still, it is nice to hear that your best young man finds you lovely, and it was with a pang that I interrupted the pleasant things he was saying.

“Don’t compliment me!” I exclaimed. “You know well enough that none of these people would look at me a second time if I were poor.”

“Sylvia!” he cried. “What a disgusting sentiment! Who has put such fancies into your pretty head?”

“Somebody who knows,” and I wagged the head he approved.

“Some spiteful female?” he hazarded.

"It wasn't," I contradicted, falling into his trap. "It was a man."

"Ah," he said, with an amused smile, "and, of course, he was above such sordid views himself——"

"Above such sordid views?" I interrupted. "I should think he was. It was Bobby!"

"Bobby!" exclaimed Paul, much diverted. "I was going to add 'and loved you for yourself alone,' but I don't suppose Bobby has reached those lofty heights—oh! he has, has he?" as I blushed uncomfortably. "Well! he is an impertinent young jackanapes and ought to be sent back to school. Upon my word, his effrontery passes a joke!"

Now, one does not like one's first proposal to be scoffed at, and I took up the cudgels for Bobby.

"He spoke for my own good," I said, with dignity, "and I understood him perfectly."

"And perhaps encouraged him a little," suggested Paul. "Poor young beggar!"

"You are in a nasty temper, Paul; I don't like you to-night."

I think he was a bit ashamed of his petulance, for he answered, very gently:

"Don't become suspicious and worldly wise at nineteen. You have so much to make life pleasant, why not enjoy it, without diving into people's motives? Take the men who have been making much of you to-night; half of them have wives of their own, and lots of them are rich, so really I can't see what they have to gain except the pleasure of dancing and talking with a pretty girl."

"Yet I am told there are as many pretty girls among the wallflowers as plain ones," I persisted.

"Well, then, they are stupid, or snappish, or have waspish mammas. At all events, it's a mistake to bring such a charge against the men of your own town, and I hope you will never say it to anyone except me," and Paul's tone was rather instructive.

"You have scolded me a great deal," I said. "I am tired of being put in the corner."

If a man wishes to win a woman, heart and soul, he has only to find fault one moment and flatter the next.

"Scolded?" he repeated. "My very dearest child, do you suppose a man scolds the woman he most desires to please?"

"Do you care to please me, Paul?"

"You know I do," he answered.

"And yet I was beginning to fear you had forgotten our compact."

He looked puzzled, so I explained.

"We made it when we were driving home from the police station. It was a compact of friendship only, but we shook hands in solemn ratification."

"Do it again," he said, "and perhaps the solemnity may steady my nerves. When you sit in a greenwood bower at four o'clock in the morning with the lady of your—admiration, you find yourself gravitating toward a more heart-to-heart talk than the lady seems to approve."

I knew well enough that I should not have given Paul my hand if Grandmamma had been peeping through the palms, but she wasn't; besides, what I was about to say would put an end to sentiment.

"Do you feel at all drawn to the undeserving poor?" I began.

"Æsthetically, no," he answered, looking highly amused; "but to oblige you my interest can become thrilling."

"I am fretting over O'Brien's family," I continued. "I feel so responsible for them! Possibly they have saved something against a rainy day, but it will soon be exhausted if his imprisonment is a long one."

"Saved something?" Paul repeated. "Vegetables or dogs? He seems to have dealt in both. You fear they have eaten their last fox-terrier steak smothered in onions?"

I flushed.

"I see I have only appealed to your sense of the ridiculous, and—I've changed my mind. I do not need your help," and I half-rose from the sofa and withdrew my hand from his clasp.

"Sit down, little hot-tempered Sylvia," he replied, repossessing himself of my hand and drawing me back to my place on the sofa. "Of course, I will find out anything you wish about your dog stealer. I shall go to-morrow and take them money or food, or try to do something to rescue the boy from his father's fate—or, in short, anything you bid me."

The tears started to my eyes. It always touches me when people give in to me after I have been cross.

"You are so good," I began. "Of course, you understand the financial part is mine—" But at that moment a potted palm which had been swaying in an insane manner fell over with a crash, and Lord Dumpty took a header into our retreat, landing in a sitting position at my feet.

"Dropped in t' shay good-night," he explained, as if his methods were quite usual. "All the 'multis' gone home—Shally's dying t' go, too; Shally's a 'multi!' Shally's risch, but she's not always kind. She said to-night I was dishgrace. Shally ought 'remember I'm 'n orphan in shtrange land!' And overcome by the pathos of his situation, he laid his head on my footstool and burst into tears.

Paul finally persuaded him to get up, and did his best to wipe off the green mould, which bore evidence to the encounter with the flower-pot. Lord Dumpty promptly fixed the blame where it belonged.

"Danjerush t'av sush unshteady things about. It's menish t' life!" I quite agreed with him, only it was not the unsteadiness of the flower-pot which constituted the menace to Sally's life. She, poor lady, was cloaked and waiting in the hall, and when the front door closed behind her and her convivial lord every guest had apparently gone except Paul. Perhaps I hoped for another word with him, but if so, Grandmamma was of quite a different mind. She made it plain that it was time for him to go, too, and sent me to bed, while she waited below to give some orders.

As I passed the library door I heard Grandpapa's voice in earnest conver-

sation, and turned in to bid him good-night. He and Badini were looking at my father's portrait, the latter in rapt admiration. His own fame as a portrait painter was world-wide, so that his enthusiasm was particularly agreeable to the General. He was saying, as I entered:

"He is a genius, your Sargent, and this, to my mind, is his very finest production!" At that moment he caught sight of me, and exclaimed, under his breath: "What a resemblance!"

Grandpapa turned to me.

"Signor Badini, Sylvia, is very much pleased with our portrait. It is the tribute of one great artist to another. I have asked him to paint a full-length of you, my child, and he tells me your sittings can begin at once."

"I should almost fear to place my art beside Sargent's, were it not that Mademoiselle's face is an inspiration," said the artist.

"We cannot leave its interpretation in safer hands," the General answered, with his elaborate courtesy, and Badini took his departure, for the clock was pointing to half-past four.

I slept until twelve the following morning, and felt what Bobby would have called "boiled owlsh" for the next twenty-four hours. I couldn't attend to anything, and it was not till the day before Christmas that I stopped at Frost & Snow's to change a pair of lorgnettes I had bought for Grandmamma. The shop was so crowded it was almost impossible to claim the attention of a clerk, and I stood waiting my chance to get near the counter. In front of me—so close that my muff brushed his coat—was Paul, examining jeweled chains. He seemed rather *difficile*, for one after another was examined and rejected. Finally his choice was made, and a very extravagant choice I thought it was. The chain itself was massive, and thickly studded with pink and white sapphires. I was ashamed of the curiosity that had permitted me to possess myself of even this much of

Paul's secrets, and I moved to the other end of the shop without making my presence known to him.

All that day there was a warm little spot in my heart. Paul had no mother or sister to play Santa Claus to, and therefore the chain must be for some lady he delighted to honor. Of course it could not be for me—but if by some wild chance it should be, just for the sake of argument, you know, wasn't it a shame that I should not be allowed to keep it! Grandpapa felt acutely about his womenkind accepting presents. When older people are so strict they almost tempt one into deceit; not that I should ever really conceal such a present as that! During the rest of the day, at each peal of the bell my heart gave an answering thump, and on Christmas morning, when that goose, Mary, came to open my shutters, it nearly jumped into my throat when she said:

"If you please, Miss Stirling, Mr. de Trasque's own man has just come with this package for you."

I sat up in bed, breathless with excitement, and received—a square lilac box containing a bunch of violets and Paul's card, and by all that's holy, not another thing!

When Mary left me I thrust my feet into my slippers, and I kicked that box round the room twice before I went to my bath. Of course, it was an awful give-away, but no one saw it but Wash, and he seemed terribly cast down. Perhaps he feared it was something to eat which had missed its true destination.

The worst trial of all is that I cannot show my resentment. It is certainly not my business if Paul sends jewelry to other ladies, and his manner to me is as charmingly devoted as ever. It always suggests that, were it not for the reverence in which he holds me, his admiration would be poured out in language that would soon bring things to a crisis. Sometimes I wish—no, I don't, either.

He kept his word in regard to the O'Briens in the generous, whole-souled way which is part of his character. It cannot be pleasant to pen-

etrate a jail to get an address, and then to pursue the same to the heart of the worst tenement district, but he did it, and gleaned a kind of reward in knowing he had accomplished some good. He found O'Brien's wife dying of consumption and dependent on her son and her neighbors for the little care she got. Paul managed to establish relations with her priest and certain sisters of charity, and we gladly put what money they needed at their disposal; but with Tim—her freckled scamp of a son—the case was much harder. If ever there was an abandoned imp of darkness, it was Tim! He would have pawned his mother's bed to keep himself in tobacco. He ate the delicacies the sisters provided for the sick woman, and finally made way with the rent money the priest entrusted to him. Paul wished to put him under restraint and to send his mother to the hospital, but her only happiness lay in being with him, so we felt it would be cruel to break up her home. If dying eyes could be cheered by the sight of his impish countenance, we trusted that until the end came he might be saved from the long arm of the law.

I wonder why I have written all this! Other people's charities are boring in their recital, and when I read novels I always skip the politics of the hero and the altruistic exploits of the heroine. It is distinctly unfair to write what it would bore you yourself to read, and I shall never speak of the O'Briens again; only, wasn't it dear in Paul!

Before the holidays were over Bobby came to say good-bye. He was starting for Harvard, and seemed to have few regrets in leaving New York. He came at a time—Sunday, just before lunch—when he knew he would find the whole family assembled, and by no chance have to see me alone. I thought his little turned-up features looked rather pathetic, and my heart smote me for my lack of gentleness.

"You will write to me, Bobby?" I ventured.

"I shall have to work very hard,"

he said. "You will hear of me from my father. Good-bye."

I stood at the window watching him go down the steps, and as he reached the sidewalk, Mr. Manhattan, who lives near us, drew up in his automobile. Bobby began examining the machine with such genuine interest that I saw I had exaggerated the pain he felt in taking leave. Finally, Mr. Manhattan invited him to run the auto up and down the street, and Bobby displayed a skill that brought high encomiums from the owner, if I could judge by his gestures and the pats of approval bestowed on Bobby's back. An idea occurred to me—a cure for the heartache. Grandpapa should send Bobby an auto as soon as he got to Cambridge, and by the Springtime he would be whisking some gentle Annie up hill and down dale, and I should be forgiven. At any rate, for the time being I had other things to engage my attention.

I do not know how Grandmamma really felt about Badini painting my portrait. She admired his work, and she agreed with the General that now was the best time to put me on canvas, but her dislike to the man was evident. She could not bring herself to discuss me with him, even in such matters as to what I should wear and how I should pose, but she tried all sorts of experiments for her own edification. She dressed me in white satin and then in white muslin. She placed me on a sofa with an opera cloak falling from my shoulders, and then against a green curtain, which she fancied brought out the tawny shades of my hair. I was at one moment a wood nymph in modern—and modest—dress, and the next, Angelica Kaufman's vestal virgin.

When the time came Badini politely resisted all suggestions and painted me seated, with my hands lying idly in my lap. The expression of the lips was serious—only the eyes smiled. The drapery was of a soft white material, so simple and harmonious that it failed to draw attention from the head. Badini worked with enthusiasm. Grandmamma watched and knitted.

Little by little our distrust of the artist wore away. He had seen much of the world and conveyed his impressions charmingly. The sittings were never irksome. It was marvelous that a person could give out so much of himself as Badini did without effort; his art, his conversational powers, his courtesy were all ours to the fullest measure. I began to believe that my disagreeable impression of him was the result of an enforced intimacy with Mrs. Brassey. The vulgarity that surrounded her seemed to taint all that came near.

The studio was very attractive. Pictures lined the walls—many of Badini's own, many that had been given to him. Low divans were pushed against the wainscot and piled high with gaudy cushions. Statuary and bronzes were scattered about, and the floors were almost covered with superb skins and rugs.

The picture grew with surprising rapidity, until it seemed to me another touch would spoil it, but Badini was not sure.

"With your permission, Countess, I shall leave it for a fortnight and then ask Mademoiselle to give me another sitting. She and the picture are so blended in my mind that I cannot disentangle the impressions, and I must come back to it after an absence to judge of its defects. It must have no defects!" he added, with warmth.

Grandmamma took leave of him quite reluctantly. If she could have spoken her mind she would have said, "I expected to find you insufferable, and you have won my toleration for yourself and my admiration for your methods." But as we do not live in the Palace of Truth, she said, "We shall be glad to resume our sittings, Signor Badini; the hours spent here are among my pleasant memories."

V

A LADIES' lunch! Was there ever an institution so much reprobated and so persistently resorted to? It is so all-embracing and it spares the men

of the family. As far as my observation goes, women always accept lunch invitations—unless they have already engaged themselves elsewhere—then grumble at having to go, and return from the entertainment full of abuse of all they met and all they ate. If people will eat two banquets a day straight through the season, is it surprising that they become gouty dyspeptics, and that the rest of the year is spent in pursuing health from Carlsbad to the Virginia Hot Springs?

The inevitable overtook Grandmamma and me. We had to have a lunch, for nothing else comprehended all to whom we wished to be civil, and the day was upon us. In the broad light of day we put on our most elaborate house frocks and awaited our guests. They came, as Worth and Doucet and Paquin had turned them out, marvels of gorgeousness and with critical eyes covertly examining one another.

There were Mrs. Manhattan and Mrs. Brassey and Mrs. Fairlamb—wife of the Reverend whose stirring Advent sermons had electrified New York—and Mrs. McTorture, whose husband stands at the very head of the medical profession, and Sally Dumpty, and her mother, Mrs. Van Boskirk, and Miss Solon, who was a person with views, and able, moreover, to express them in language that went straight to the point, and—but I forget—six or seven more, all among the best the town affords, and we sat down amid the Babel of tongues that characterizes any gathering of American women.

Our dining-room is flooded with sunshine, and the conservatory opens on it, so the impression is distinctly cheerful. The room is wainscoted with carved mahogany ever so high up the walls, and running along the top is a broad frieze of tapestry representing birds and flowers, in the charming, subdued colors that time only can effect. The table, of old mahogany, is like a mirror and almost black, and we always have lunch without the cloth, because the flowers and glass and silver and lace are so lovely

on its polished surface. A party of women is more picturesque than one with an admixture of men. Their clothes are more artistic, and when they pull off their gloves I delight in their pretty hands and glistening rings. But how they do chatter! The first distinct sentence that caught the ear of the company was from Mrs. Manhattan.

"So Mary Venture is married at last! I heard it just as I left my house."

"How terrible!" said the wife of the Reverend; "it seems as if Providence had given her warning after warning."

"What about her?" asked Mrs. Van Boskirk, who had failed to give herself the habit of acquiring scandal, and was always being helped to the level of the conversation.

"The town has been ringing with it for three weeks," said Mrs. Manhattan. "She wanted to marry Harry Jermyn, and her father forbade him the house because he was a divorced man, and then, finding they still met, he decided to take her abroad. She went on the steamer as good as gold, and marched down to her stateroom and changed her dress for widow's weeds with a thick crêpe veil, and she swept past old Venture and off the ship just as they were hauling down the gangway, and Jermyn was waiting in a cab, and so the ship sailed with the old man and all her trunks, and she and Harry set about getting married. They went first to your husband, didn't they, Mrs. Fairlamb?"

Mrs. Fairlamb bridled.

"I do not feel at liberty to discuss Mr. Fairlamb's professional experiences."

"Highly commendable, I'm sure," said Mrs. Manhattan, with a sniff. "At all events, it seems the clergy have some bee in their bonnets about the divorce question, so Mr. Fairlamb refused to do it himself, but he gave them the addresses of three other ministers who, he thought, might be less particular. The first on the list was a Presbyterian, and he said he'd be

boiled if he'd do his Episcopal brother's dirty work—only, of course, he expressed it in courteous language. The next was a Methodist, but he was out burying a man, and they didn't like to wait. So finally they brought up at a Baptist's, and he was in bed with an influenza caught at the last immersion, and absolutely declined receiving Jermyn and Mary in his bedroom. They all preferred letting the poor girl wander about the town rather than run any risk——"

Here Mrs. Fairlamb could stand it no longer and took up the defense.

"You do not understand that a clergyman is forbidden by the laws of the Church to marry divorced persons."

"Only the one at fault, Mrs. Fairlamb," said Miss Solon, with authority.

"Besides," said the clerical lady, "the reputation of a clergyman is as delicate as a girl's, and he must avoid even the appearance of evil. You would hardly guess what next transpired. Mr. Jermyn came back to our house after dark and asked Mr. Fairlamb to entreat me to keep Miss Venture over night till he could make arrangements at the Mayor's office for the marriage the next day. Did you ever hear of such effrontery? My husband simply declined to have me associated with any young woman who could put herself in such an equivocal position."

"It is a pity," said Miss Solon, "that such decent conduct on Jermyn's part should not have been encouraged."

"Well," continued Mrs. Manhattan, "the upshot was she went for the night to an old nurse who had rooms in a tenement house, and she had hardly got there before she broke out with measles, and they sent for her doctor——" here she glanced at Mrs. McTorture—"and he took her off to the Willard Parker Hospital, where she has been ever since."

"And very ill she has been," put in Mrs. McTorture, who did not share Mrs. Fairlamb's professional scruples, "and Frederick says it was a nip and

tuck race between the measles and the steamer which was bringing old Venture home, but Mary won and was married by the Mayor this morning, and the *Majestic* can't get in till this afternoon."

"Speaking of measles," said Mrs. Brassey, "did you ever hear anything so awful as this smallpox scare? Fourteen women clerks, an elevator boy and a porter all taken out of Jewsharph's yesterday with the disease well developed."

"I heard *four*," said Mrs. McTorture.

"And I have reason to know there was only one, who did not have the smallpox, but had only been exposed to it," said Miss Solon.

This made a slight break in the flow of agreeable conversation, and I heard the Countess's voice from the other end of the table ambling on gently about Justin McCarthy's "Reminiscences," and how pleased she was to have her suspicions confirmed that Mr. George W. E. Russell had written "Collections and Recollections," though indeed there had never been any doubt in her mind, and then the hubbub of talk near me began again.

"What a beautiful chain you have, Mrs. Manhattan! Was that a Christmas present?" said Sally Dumpty, who sat next to that lady; and to my disgust, I saw the very chain I had spied Paul buying the day before Christmas.

"It is pretty," Mrs. Manhattan agreed. "It was given to me by my best young man, and I think he showed commendable taste."

"Oh, Mrs. Manhattan!" said Sally, shaking her finger, "I'm afraid you're a sad flirt, and I am sure Mr. Manhattan is prouder of your conquests than you are! That's just the kind of husband I want Dumpty to be!"

I do not think Dumpty will be called upon to exercise much conjugal leniency in the matter of Sally's adorers, but I must say I think Mr. Manhattan is criminal to allow such goings on. Not that I blame Paul. It is not easy for men to hold out against the encouragement of such women as Mrs. Manhattan. I consider them beneath

contempt, and I only hope some day Paul's eyes may be opened and he will see her as she really is! Here my bitter thoughts were interrupted by hearing Badini's name. Miss Solon was saying:

"She had an appointment for a sitting, and being a married woman of forty, she went alone, and the moment she opened the door he took her in his arms and would have kissed her if she had not thrown her muff in his face."

"There must be some mistake," whined Mrs. Brassey. "Badini is a perfect gentleman, if ever there was one; he must have known the lady would like it."

"Like it!" repeated Miss Solon. "Do you think Mrs. Augustus Prance is a person to invite liberties?"

We all wagged our heads in unanimous endorsement of Mrs. Prance's repressing qualities, and whispered, "How dared he!" Mrs. Manhattan said the question was not so much how he dared, as why he wanted to, and she thought the explanation lay in too much Chianti. Mrs. Brassey became his champion with so much voice and fuss that Grandmamma kindly put in a good word for Badini, and the day seemed won.

When lunch was over Grandmamma tried to catch Mrs. Van Boskirk's eye, as she was the oldest lady at the table, but she was pouring out complaints of her cook to Mrs. Fairlamb and could not be diverted.

"One hundred dollars a month, my dear, and a kitchenmaid to scrape his vegetables for him, and he gave us plain gravy soup five nights running, till Dumpty said he might as well be home in England. Dumpty likes purées and green turtle and the Yacht Club recipe for chowder, and I hate to have him 'contrairied' in his food. He is a very sweet young fellow, is Dumpty, and Sally's a lucky girl."

Here Grandmamma boldly rose, and Mrs. Van Boskirk was forced to continue her eulogies of her son-in-law elsewhere.

Coffee was served in the drawing-room and the ladies began to take

leave, but Sally and Mrs. Manhattan were still here when the door opened to admit Grandpapa and Paul. The General had come to get the Countess to go sleighing with him, for we had had a grand snowstorm and the extreme cold had prevented melting. He does not like to be balked in his plans, and he cast rather vindictive glances at the remaining guests.

"How long do these absurd things last?" he growled to me as he passed, but it only needed a few words from Grandmamma to charm back his smiles.

Why Paul came I do not like to guess, but what he did—as soon as he had kissed the Countess's hand and bowed to Sally and me—was to take a chair by Mrs. Manhattan and begin a conversation in such a low tone that I could not hear one word. To be sure, Sally would keep up an incessant prattle about Humpty Castle and Shamrock Towers, and how Dumpty had just got out a lot of photographs of both, so that she could decide which place she preferred putting in order, and all the time I was straining my ears to catch what Paul was saying. He took hold of the pink and white sapphire chain, so I suppose that must have been under discussion, though I should think her acknowledgments would have been at Christmas. People do not wait three weeks to say "thank you" to their best young man. I also considered it rather familiar in Paul to touch an ornament Mrs. Manhattan was wearing, but perhaps I grow censorious.

At last she made her adieux, and turning once more to Paul, said:

"I shall expect you at twelve punctually; do not disappoint me. Are you coming with me, Sally?"

Grandpapa went with them into the hall, the Countess escaped to dress for her drive, and Paul came over to me.

"Mrs. Manhattan is having a supper for some of the opera troupe celebrities," he explained, "and she has asked a few theatrical people and some outsiders to meet them. It ought to be amusing."

"It will probably result in a sort of

glorified Lambs' Club entertainment—too respectable to be gay, and too professional to be smart. I do not envy you!" I snapped.

Paul seemed surprised at my tone and slightly annoyed, but he made another effort at conversation.

"Did you happen to notice Mrs. Manhattan's chain, Sylvia?"

This was adding insult to injury.

"I could hardly fail to do so when she announced at lunch that it had been given to her by her best young man," I answered, growing very red, and half turning away to watch the blaze of the fire.

He smiled almost tenderly.

"Isn't it a shame that people cannot give such things to dear little girls?"

I whisked my skirts round and faced him.

"On the contrary," I said, "let us make every distinction between the treatment of fast married women and nice-minded girls."

"All nice-minded people are not nice tempered, I am afraid," he said, with a mocking smile; "but I don't blame you. I had always heard that female lunches played the deuce generally. I had come for a long talk and perhaps I should have tried my luck at begging for a walk as well, but I fear to fall into deeper disgrace, so good-bye," and he was gone.

A few minutes later Grandmamma came down, muffled in her furs. I heard their sleigh-bells jingling as they flew past the windows, and I was left alone with my own bad temper. Jealousy is the very nastiest passion that exists, and I hated myself—and I was awfully ashamed, and oh, dear! how I wished I had not sent Paul away and made him think me odious!

VI

JANUARY was wearing away. We had had our second dance and the opera was becoming an old story. I cannot say that I was surfeited with balls, because Grandmamma usually insisted on my going home early,

sarcastically remarking that an unstrained constitution was even more desirable than an accumulation of co-tillion favors. Still, I had seen a good deal of what is called society, and I felt as if years, instead of weeks, stretched between me and the early Autumn, when I was Bobby's boon companion. I do not suppose I was quite as nice, but I was much more womanly.

I did not attempt to disguise from myself my interest in Paul, but I honestly believed that his regard for me was one of friendship only, and while I writhed under the evidences of his attentions to Mrs. Manhattan, my sense of justice brought no charge against him on the score of double dealing. When he came to the house I was happy; when he stayed away my jealousy furnished me with the gloomiest suspicions. As for the lady, I silently bestowed on her all the abusive names in a girl's vocabulary, of which "cat," "minx" and "grabber" were the least vindictive. The idea that Paul was singeing his wings at the great beauty's candle was by no means evolved by my fancy. Gossip was very busy with their names, and was only held in check by Mr. Manhattan's friendship for Paul.

No wonder that under the stress of so much suppressed feeling I began to grow pale and thin, and violet shadows appeared under my eyes.

The Countess developed a cold; not of a serious character, but sufficiently severe for the doctor to forbid her going down stairs for a few days, and we more than ever rejoiced that the library, the room of our affections, was up stairs, so that she was not cut off from the family life.

At this juncture a note came from Badini begging for a few last sittings, as urgent business recalled him to the other side early in February. It was decided that I should take my maid and keep the appointment, Grandmamma being sure that if Badini were as black as he was painted he would before now have shown his cloven hoof.

Why is it, in the supreme events of life, that the impressions of external surroundings are so vivid? Even the time that anticipates a crisis is stamped in the memory with peculiar sharpness. I can recall distinctly the most unimportant incidents of my drive with Mary down to Badini's studio, how every carriage that met us seemed filled with old people or children sent out to profit by the short-lived Winter sunshine before the chill of the sunset should descend. There was a pang of self-pity that I had to spend the next two hours in posing instead of joining Grandpapa in his gallop round the bridle path. Such a blue sky, such fleecy, baby clouds, and everywhere that delusive suggestion of early Spring with which Midwinter loves to mock us.

Badini opened the studio door for us, and I noted with satisfaction that, seeing I had only a servant with me, he did not even offer to shake hands after my long absence, though he prided himself on observing American customs. I took my seat on the model throne, and Mary gathered up my discarded cloak and placed it on a chair near the door. Badini wheeled his easel into position, threw back the covering and gazed first at the portrait, then at me, with a puzzled expression.

"What have you done to yourself?" he exclaimed. "I painted a child, and you come back to me a woman—but beautiful, far more beautiful," he murmured softly to himself.

He mixed some colors and stood hesitating about touching the picture again.

"Shall we leave this little lady with the laughing eyes?" he asked, "or shall we give her the experiences of her prototype? A touch to the brow, a curve to the lips, a deepening of the shadows, and the story betrays itself."

I resented the personality of the remarks, and yet surely my face, grave or gay, was legitimately of interest to the artist who had undertaken to reproduce it.

"We will leave it," I said, hoping

to end the discussion. "You fancy what does not exist."

"I am mistaken, then," he agreed. "We shall not again touch the face, but in color something is lacking. We have the browns and greens of the woodland background, and your own glorious coloring of hair and complexion, but it needs blue—I wish I had a blue ribbon to try effects with!"

He did well to paint me as a child. I was one, and a silly one at that.

"Let us send Mary for it," I cried, for his criticism appealed to my own sense of color; "there must be plenty of milliners' shops in the neighborhood where she can find ribbon. She can be back in a moment."

"Mademoiselle is so kind," he responded; "she anticipates the desires of my heart."

"What nonsense he talks!" I thought, as he followed Mary to the elevator shaft to show her which bell to ring. He was back in a moment, and taking up a square of canvas that had been standing with its face against the wall, he placed it on an empty easel and invited me to give my judgment. To my amazement I beheld a copy of my own head from the portrait, but idealized until it was as the face of an angel.

"Your kindness gives me courage to make my confession. I have stolen your face so as to have you always with me, but that you should also desire a private interview—this, my pretty one, is bliss indeed! I have sent your maid on a fool's errand; she will be long in returning, and so, my beautiful Sylvia—" and here he caught me in his arms and began raining kisses on my face and shoulders.

It was all so sudden, so disgusting, so insulting, that I was paralyzed for a moment, but with a cry of fury I struggled to my feet, and wrenching myself free from his arms I dealt him a blow that made him stagger back to the edge of the platform, where he missed his footing and fell, striking his head against the easel.

I did not wait to learn the effects of

his fall, but made a wild rush for the door, grasping my cloak as I flew. I did not ring for the elevator, but dashed down the staircase and was in the street in my low-necked white muslin gown before I remembered to put on my cloak. I was lucky enough to catch a passing hansom, and shrank into a corner, hoping no one would see my hatless condition—above all, no one I knew.

At Fifty-ninth street I almost ran over the General, jogging slowly back from his afternoon ride, and failing to attract his attention, I ordered my cabman to follow him to the Riding Club. Here I overtook him and poured out my tale of rage.

I had never before seen anger at white heat. I should not have known my grandfather—he looked insane. He sprang into a cab, still grasping his riding-whip, and shouting to the driver, "Don't spare your horse," was out of sight almost before I had finished speaking.

I crept back into my hansom, completely subdued by a sense of coming evil. On what mission had I sent my dear old gentleman, with his set white face and flaring eyes?

At our house I left Stubbs to pay my cabman and rushed up stairs to find the Countess. She was in the library with Paul, and I stood before them trembling with excitement and reluctant to tell my story. Grandmamma became alarmed.

"What has happened?" she inquired. "You look as if you had seen some horror."

"Badini has insulted me by kissing me," I said, "and I have sent Grandpapa to reckon with him."

It was now Grandmamma's turn to go white.

"You sent your grandfather!" she cried, angrily. "*You*, who ought to know how hot-tempered he is! You're a fool, Sylvia!" and she stamped her foot on the floor.

I turned from her to Paul.

"Do you think he'll kill Badini?" I asked, under my breath.

He smiled reassuringly.

"Why should he? He will give

him the thrashing he deserves—but if it will be of any comfort to you I will follow him. Certainly the General is not what you might call 'slow to anger,'" and he was gone.

The Countess had sunk back in her chair, looking old and haggard. I felt almost resentful. After all, the General was my relative, not hers; it was I who had passed through insult and anxiety, not she. Still, I mastered my irritation in a moment and knelt by her side.

"Say something to comfort me, Grandmamma," I begged.

"My child," she said, solemnly, "learn early in life never to embroil your menkind in your quarrels. There is no surer way to precipitate a tragedy."

"Would you like me to submit to such indignities without resentment?" I asked, in dismay.

"By no means," she answered, "but I was the proper person to appeal to. With my influence abroad I could have ruined Badini professionally. The punishment would have been much more subtle than physical violence."

"I don't want him ruined and I do want him hurt," I retorted, springing to my feet. "I want him thrashed within an inch of his life!" and I left the room.

"What makes Grandmamma so unjust and unlike herself?" I thought. "If she were younger I should suspect her of a *tendresse* for the General."

I can only continue my account from what we afterward gathered from Grandpapa, from Paul, and from what Badini was willing to tell, but it makes the story of this unpleasant afternoon more clear and consecutive if I give it now.

The General declares that when he started from the Riding Club he had no plan of procedure in his mind, only a burning desire to take vengeance on the Italian. He rattled down the Avenue at such a pace that he expected every moment to be stopped by the police, and arrived in an incredibly short time.

The door of the studio was slightly open, and my maid was standing near it in the act of taking a crisp bank note from Badini's hand, whether as the price of silence or in fulfilment of a pledge he had given to secure her prolonged absence, the General did not stop to ask.

"Go!" he almost screamed, "and never show your face again in my house."

Badini looked annoyed. He evidently expected something unpleasant from the expression of my grandfather's face, but with his knowledge of women he probably made sure that I would not have repeated what had taken place, for my own sake—even the most innocent would suffer from such a scene being known.

Grandpapa wasted no words. He seized Badini by the back of his collar and thrashed him till the heavy riding-whip broke in his hand. The artist took his punishment without flinching; he was like a child in the grasp of that huge frame. When the whip broke and the General, with a gasp, let go his hold, Badini staggered to a table and pulled open a drawer. He drew out a box of duelling pistols and motioned to the General to take one. The old man's scornful laugh rang through the room.

"Do you think I'd stoop to give you the satisfaction of a gentleman, you hound?" And taking his hat, he turned toward the door.

Badini was nearly blind with passion, but steadying himself against the table, he deliberately took aim and fired at the General's back.

The old soldier had been gallantly through the Civil War, and had afterward seen much service on the plains, but had never felt a wound until that Winter afternoon in the luxurious lair of this little Italian jackal. A deadly faintness was overcoming him, but he managed to reach a divan, and sinking down, he lay like a dead man.

Badini never changed his position; at least, so he afterward told the doctor. He still leaned against the table and glared at the General's prostrate body. It did not occur to him to do

anything to assist his victim. He hardly felt in any way connected with the catastrophe. His own body, which was twitching with a nervous chill, seemed somehow aloof from his consciousness. How long this situation lasted he never knew, but at last the door opened and Paul de Trasque came in.

We latter-day sinners are so business-like! First Paul knelt beside the General, and found he still breathed. Without glancing at Badini, he locked the door and put the key into his pocket; he examined the pistols and took possession of them; then, going to the telephone, he found the address of the physician he wanted, as deliberately as if he had been in a public pay-station instead of in the company of a dying man and his murderer.

Crossing over to Badini, he shook him out of his apathy.

"Get me water and bandages, can't you? The man will bleed to death."

Badini brought towels and handkerchiefs and a basin of water, and Paul got to work. There was a tap at the door, and he opened it to admit the doctor.

At the end of the examination the announcement came:

"He won't die."

Paul's heart gave a great joyful thump, but to Badini the relief was greater than he could bear. He sank into a chair, and sob after sob seemed to tear his chest in two.

"Stop that!" roared the doctor, "and get me some brandy;" and again Badini was subservient to the stronger will.

Gradually the General came to himself. An ambulance was sent for, and they were about to carry him down stairs when the Italian started forward.

"Gentlemen," he cried, "I shall at once give myself up to the authorities, to await the result of General Stirling's wound."

"You will do nothing of the sort!" moaned the wounded man. "Do you suppose I am going to have my private affairs dragged into court? I had my

satisfaction, and you have had yours. But one thing I insist on. My granddaughter's picture leaves this room when I do, and its duplicate you will burn before my eyes."

"You will work yourself into a fever," remonstrated the doctor.

"Pay him, Paul!" thundered the General, now greatly excited. "Give him your cheque for five thousand dollars, and I will settle with you tomorrow."

"With pleasure, sir," answered the young man, soothingly, adding *sotto voce* to the doctor: "I hope to gracious my account is good for it!"

"You insult me!" said the artist, with some dignity. "I shall await General Stirling's convenience for the cheque."

"Burn the second picture!" insisted the General.

The doctor now whispered to Badini that he could not answer for the consequences if the General were further excited, and in a moment my idealized portrait was crackling and blazing among the ashes of the fireplace.

Perhaps Badini was not the person who felt the keenest pain at the destruction. I have heard that Paul's brown face looked rather gray as the flames curled round my throat and lips, and he has told me himself that he turned away before the eyes were shut out forever.

The General fought every inch of the ground from the studio to the street. He demanded that my picture should be put in the ambulance with him, as he did not wish to leave it in Badini's keeping; but was finally persuaded to let Paul return for it later in the day. Then he refused to go in the ambulance at all unless the driver promised to proceed at a moderate pace and not to ring the gong. He would not be responsible for running over the innocent citizens of New York just because an ambulance man chose to drive at breakneck speed, and the clanging of that infernal gong was enough to drive a sick man into his grave. At this point the General relapsed into unconsciousness.

Paul took a cab, and by great good

luck got to the house before Grandpapa and Dr. McTorture, so that we had a few moments of preparation; and fortunately those few moments were so actively employed that we had no time to realize the misfortune that had overtaken us. That I should have risked my grandfather's life by my impulsiveness seemed too horrible. I felt the Countess's reproachful eyes following me about as I flitted from place to place, trying to anticipate the doctor's requirements; but she was very kind and sympathetic to me later, when more surgeons arrived and we knew Grandpapa was in their hands. At last we were told that the bullet had been found and removed, and there was nothing to prevent a safe and speedy recovery; and what blessed news it was!

I cannot begin to describe Paul's devotion to Grandpapa during his illness. He was always at his service, and never in his way, and he had the tact to treat the sick man as a reasonable being and not as an irresponsible maniac.

My portrait, which had become a thing of evil association in my mind, was brought home the very night of the catastrophe and had been sent to be framed. Before dismissing Badini's name from these pages I must record his last effort at small spite. He undoubtedly believed that my grandfather was about to marry Mrs. Brassey. I am sure that lady had taken infinite pains to convey the impression. When, at the end of ten days, we sent him the cheque that he had refused the day of the shooting, he returned it, with the request that we should pay him only forty-five hundred dollars, and asking that the remaining five hundred dollars be sent to Mrs. Brassey as a commission he had agreed to pay her for having secured me as a subject. They must have had some quarrel, and he took this means of revenge, hoping the venality of the transaction would disgust Grandpapa.

"Send the cheque back to him," said the General when the matter came to his attention, "and say I

desire no knowledge of his private affairs. I have tried to befriend poor Brassey's widow, but she is impossible. You will give orders, Sylvia, that in future she is not to be admitted here."

If Grandmamma had been in her usual spirits I should have executed a jubilant *pas seul* behind the General's sofa for her benefit, but she seemed unresponsive to fun in those days.

For the first week after he was wounded my grandfather was too ill to assert himself in any way, and we exchanged notes of admiring wonder on his patience, but when convalescence set in we had reason to conclude that the Stirling spirit was still in full vigor. His first act was to dismiss his nurse, a rosy-cheeked young Canadian of twenty-five, who had won golden opinions from everyone and made no trouble in the house.

"My dear young lady," he said, "go and nurse your own sex or little children. I do not approve of women of your age assuming charge in a man's illness."

Nothing could change his decision. He required his valet to be always within call and refused to receive as much as a fresh pocket-handkerchief at the nurse's hands.

His next escapade was to be wheeled into the library, and finding the effort more than he had expected, he had the sofa there arranged as a couch for the daytime, and returned to his bed only at night. Dr. McTorture threatened to throw over the case if the General set his authority at defiance in this way, but as the patient made rapid strides toward recovery there seemed little reason for opposing him.

He was awake and active at the break of dawn and required his invalid toilet to be fully made by eight o'clock. The library had also to be ready for his reception, and the under-housemaid, who was caught there with her broom and duster after the appointed hour, was promptly dismissed. I shared the nurse's fate, in some respects. He considered me too young and inexperienced to be

trusted to minister to his comforts, but his demands on the Countess were unceasing. I used to hear his servant knock at her door at eight every morning, with the message: "The General's compliments, and will Mme. de Treville make his coffee, as his breakfast is waiting?" And Grandmamma, who now got up at seven o'clock in order to be ready for this summons, would obediently trot to the library and give him his breakfast. One would suppose it was some mysterious rite she only was fitted to preside over.

At first I tried to relieve her by reading the morning papers to him, but I was not a success.

"How you mumble!" he exclaimed, fretfully. "Reading aloud is a lost art with your generation. Ask the Countess whether she will be kind enough," etc.

She read to him for hours, and then played a kind of complicated solitaire under his directions, which required two packs of cards and a large table; he issuing orders and she humbly carrying them out, though as hers was the more active intelligence, she would probably have become a more brilliant player without him.

Finally, one day, when the General had returned from his first drive and was lying, somewhat exhausted, on the library sofa, a letter was brought to the Countess.

"Adèle urges my return," she observed, after reading it. "She wishes to go to the Engadine for the Summer, and begs me to join her now, so that I may be in Constantinople for a time before she leaves."

No comment came from the General, but glancing at his face as I passed on my way out of the room, I saw an expression of settled gloom, which I felt was reflected in my own. I dreaded the idea of Grandmamma leaving me.

At the end of half an hour I had occasion to return, and found our invalid in an armchair drawn close to the Countess's, his cheeks and eyes brilliant through excitement, and

looking so handsome that I nearly put my admiration into words.

"Sylvia!" he cried, "I am trying to persuade your grandmother to marry me. I cannot let her leave us; she must see that it is impossible. Have you no sense of justice?" he exclaimed, looking at her reproachfully. "You have made me as dependent on you as a child, and now you propose deserting us."

"I leave you in excellent hands," she said, drawing me to her and patting my cheek. "You and Sylvia were sufficient to each other before I came—you will be when I leave."

"A foolish argument," he answered, sadly. "Is it likely that Sylvia will be long unmarried, or that I should selfishly wish to keep her from following her own inclinations? I should try so hard to make your life an easy one!" he added, gently.

"My dear General," Grandmamma answered, "we should be the laughing stock of New York and Paris!"

He sat up very straight.

"Now we have the truth!" he exclaimed. "It is the fear of ridicule that is stronger than your sense of kindness. Who cares what the world thinks? Am I objectionable to you? Am I tyrannical or hot-tempered, or anything you fear?"

Grandmamma laughed.

"You are both tyrannical and hot-tempered, but I do not fear you the least in the world. Indeed, I find you a most charming companion, but I should consider a marriage at my age undignified."

"Dignity be damned!" he shouted. "I tell you, Countess, I will have it!" and he began pacing the room in high excitement. But he had overtaxed his strength, and in another moment he was lying on the sofa in a dead faint.

The sight of his weakness touched the Countess in a way that no argument could have done. She hastened to administer restoratives, and when Grandpapa finally came to himself she was bending over him with the tenderest solicitude.

I came to his sofa and took his hand.

"Make us both happy, Grandmamma," I entreated.

"Would you really like it, Sylvia?"

"Like it!" I repeated, my voice unsteady from emotion. "Do you suppose I can bear losing the only mother I have ever known, just when I have grown to love her?"

"I will marry you, General," she said, suddenly, and quickly left the room.

Grandpapa and I hugged each other; and I openly cried happy tears, but he only roared to Mason to fetch him a clean handkerchief and blew his nose forcibly.

We had no more setbacks after that. The General was so well by the end of the week that the doctor proposed sending him to Florida by way of perfecting his cure.

"We will be married some morning next week and start in the afternoon," the General declared—and Grandmamma, having given her word, made no silly scruples about delay. The only question was what to do with me, for I absolutely declined accompanying my grandparents on a wedding trip. The situation was odd enough without that finishing touch of absurdity.

While the subject was under discussion Sally Dumpty came in. She said she and Dumpty were going to Washington in a few days, and I could not do better than to go with them and stay for the month my grandparents would be away. Sally meant to take saddle horses, so I determined to take mine, too, for we were going to meet the Spring, and March in Washington roars more gently than in New York.

The days that intervened before the wedding were spent by the General in the greatest mental activity. He made the Countess send for her lawyer and settle every penny she had on Lady Vincent. He sent for old Mr. de Trasque, who was his lawyer, and remade his will. He gave Grandmamma a handsome sum out and out during his life, and a large share of his income in case she survived him.

I recalled his advice to me when I had gone to him early in the Winter with my discovery about the reduction in her income. "Make her love you well enough to share your purse," he had said, and he had accomplished the task where I had failed. Dear Grandmamma! how glad I was that all her secret frets and worries about money were at rest!

Before the day of the wedding was finally fixed the General dropped a line to his good friend the Bishop, asking him whether the following Tuesday at noon would be a convenient time for him to marry them, and received this mystifying reply:

DEAR GENERAL:

All engagements bow to Hymen. Tuesday at noon is yours, but I must beg for something more substantial than those enchanted herbs for breakfast.

Mrs. Saintsbody joins me in warmest congratulations to you and the Countess.

Faithfully yours,

THEODOSIUS SAINTSBODY.

"Now, what the devil does he mean?" grumbled Grandpapa, handing the letter over to the Countess. "I expected the Bishop to have his joke, but this is too far-fetched for my wits."

"He means the enchanted herbs which did renew old Æson!" quoted Grandmamma. "You're old Æson, General!" and she broke into her merry laugh.

"It won't be such a joke when he gets boiled cabbage for breakfast!" snorted the General.

Tuesday broke clear and bright. The de Trasques and the McTortures, Mrs. Van Boskirk, with Sally and Dumpty in attendance, and a few of the General's most intimate friends from his clubs made up the little company to witness the ceremony.

Grandmamma wore a rather elaborate dress of gray satin and looked under fifty, though in reality she was nearly ten years older. The General looked the old beauty I have always thought him, though more delicate than I liked to admit.

There was no unnecessary formality. My grandparents talked with

their friends until the drawing-room door was thrown open and the Bishop entered, in his robes, and then they simply stood up and were married.

The solemnity of the occasion was nearly marred by Wash, whose existence I had forgotten in the excitement of the morning. In the back drawing-room there was a semicircular sofa, upholstered to luxury and piled with down cushions of sea-green brocade. In the middle of the ceremony I saw a bullet head raised from the billowy surroundings, like Venus from the wave, and tick-tack came his claws across the parquet, till he stood actually sniffing the Episcopal petticoats. Paul caught him by the collar and forced him to join the circle of spectators.

We had a nice, comfortable wedding breakfast, all seated round the large dining-room table, and the Bishop was not restricted to boiled cabbage. He proposed the bride's health, and Grandpapa responded, saying so many pretty things about the dear lady that her cheeks were as pink as Jenny Wren's on a similar occasion.

Soon afterward they started on their trip, accompanied by servants and much luggage, and traveling in a private car, while I was left to receive the adieux of the wedding guests.

"I shall stop for you in ample time for the ten o'clock train to-morrow morning," said Sally, as she left. "Are you certain you will not be lonely to-night?"

I reassured her on that point, for I was glad to have a little time to myself to adjust my ideas after the changes and excitements I had just passed through. As I crossed the hall on my way to the library I thought the house had a desolate, after-the-ball look. The servants had all scampered down stairs to discuss the occasion and the food. Wash was just squeezing his replete person through the swing door of the pantry and joined me, licking his lips. The stairs were too much for him, however, and he sank down on a bearskin near the fire to sleep off his excesses, while I pursued my way alone.

Catching sight of my face in a mirror as I passed, I thought I looked a very pathetic little person.

"Poor Sylvia," I said, smiling tearfully. "Your nose is out of joint. Even what one most wishes brings sadness in its fulfilment," and I went on to the library.

A figure started from a deep arm-chair near the window and came toward me, and I gave a little gasp as I recognized Paul.

"I've no business to be here," he said, apologetically, "but I could not bear to think of your coming back to this lonely room with no one to say a sympathetic word. Do you think it very cheeky in me?"

"Is it an indiscretion?" I asked. "If so, it is a very welcome one. Do not despise me, but I am feeling forsaken and a trifle jealous!"

"I should hardly call it jealous," he answered, wheeling a chair for me close to the fire. "You have always been the one essential to your grandfather's happiness, and now someone else has assumed the responsibility; and no matter how cordially you may approve the new conditions, no one can resign the part of leading lady without a pang."

He was leaning his arms on the back of my chair and making his confidences to the top of my head.

"It seems to me I am of no use to anyone," I answered. "I see no reason for my being at all."

"Here is the reason, Sylvia," he said, stepping in front of me. "It may not seem a very good reason to you, but it is a very fond one," and he made a gesture indicating himself.

"Do you mean—?" I began.

"I mean," he interrupted, "that I cannot live without you—that all through the Winter I have been afraid to be left alone with you for ten minutes, for fear I should tell you the truth—that I love you—I love you," he repeated.

I think I have told more than enough to a curious public and that the rest of that short flight to heaven may remain a secret between Paul and me, but when we returned to

earth I asked him what he meant by saying he had been afraid of telling me the truth all the Winter. He confessed that the Countess had been in his confidence almost from the first, and she had exacted a promise that he should not speak until after I had seen something of other men—till, at any rate, the end of the season. "And do you know," he concluded, "I almost broke my promise that night in the cab, and again at your ball, when I made you confess about Bobby."

"As long ago as that?" I said, with wonder. "Dear boy, how much unhappiness you might have saved me! When did you begin to care for me?"

"From the first moment I saw you coming demurely through the rooms, and when we made our mad race up stairs and down, and I caught you at the door and kissed you, I registered a vow that the next time it should be with your own consent; and so it is, my sweetheart—isn't it?"

That evening I dined with Mr. de Trasque, who was almost as excited over our news as Paul himself. He came flying over to fetch me to dinner, saying I would find him an ideal chaperon—and indeed he proved himself to be so, for as soon as we had had coffee he disappeared to smoke his cigar in his study and left us to ourselves.

The door had hardly shut behind him when Paul put a little velvet box into my hand, saying tenderly, "I have waited so long to give it to you, my little love."

And there, shimmering in my palm, was the duplicate of Mrs. Manhattan's chain, with its pink and white sapphires. My heart gave a great jealous squeeze, which sent the blood throbbing to my brain and flushed my brow and cheeks with a tell-tale color.

"Don't ask me to take it, Paul," I pleaded. "I don't want to share your gifts with Mrs. Manhattan."

He stared at me in amazement.

"I have made no gifts to Mrs. Manhattan. She has such a chain, but it did not come from me."

"I saw you buying it," I faltered, "and I moved away for fear you

would think me prying, and then at our lunch this Winter Mrs. Manhattan had it on—at least, I thought it was the same—and she told Sally Dumpty her best young man had given it to her.”

“Thereby proving that I am not her best young man. On what threads of evidence hang our reputations!” he exclaimed, impatiently, but seeing that I looked unhappy he hastened to explain. “I begged the Countess to let me give you this at Christmas, but she refused. She was rather cruel to me, though I know she wished me success in her heart.”

“Then you never gave it to Mrs. Manhattan, and you never really cared for her, and I am your one and only love, now and forever?” and I put the chain round my neck and made the artless return that women and children seem to think covers all obligations.

“Now and forever,” he repeated, almost solemnly; “but I have something to say to you. I am ten years older than you, and I have seen much of what is called life. Be content to believe that if I did not consider myself a decent, honorable man I should not ask you to marry me, for I love you too well to play with your happiness. But I do not mean to turn my engagement into a confessional, where my experiences and other people’s secrets are poured out, under the plea of making a clean breast of it. You must take me on trust, little Sylvia.”

“And how about me?” I said, saucily. “Are you willing to take me on trust, too?”

He did not respond to my change of mood, but looking at me with a world of sweetness in his eyes, he answered:

“Thank God! I absolutely know the whiteness of your beautiful soul, my child.”

How much larger Paul’s nature is than mine! When I feel deeply I hide my emotion by a jest, or I change the subject, fearing a tragic note; but Paul is not ashamed to show his feelings to those he loves. He gives you his heart’s message with the cer-

tainty that you will understand. I like the manliness of a direct simplicity.

My maid came for me in the brougham at half-past nine, for I wished to write to my grandparents before I went to bed, and Paul also had to make his explanations by letter.

We decided not to announce our engagement till after their return, but we agreed that as soon as we heard from them we would confide in Sally and Dumpty, so that Paul could join me in Washington. It would have been too dreadful to waste the early Spring sunshine, when we might be consecrating it to such romantic purposes. My rides and drives and walks in the public gardens and mornings at Mt. Vernon would have been tame indeed without Paul.

How unpleasant it must be to have to fight your natural guardians for permission to marry! With me, I knew that Paul was the man, of all others, my grandparents would most approve. If we were in France it would have been a match arranged by our families long ago, so that in waiting to hear from my dear old people there was no uncertainty as to the reception of our wishes. And when their letters came, how we were blessed and gushed over and petted, and a ready consent given to our marriage in April.

I shall pass over our Washington visit, because nothing is so dull as the uninterrupted love-making of a pair of prosperous lovers; but in justice to Sally I must testify to Dumpty’s many charming qualities, which I never suspected till we were thrown together on terms of close intimacy. He was fond of his wife, considerate to her friends and respectful to American manners and customs. He was as gay as a child and loved to teach Sally to enjoy her own money. Life was one continuous merry-go-round to him, and his sunny temper was never ruffled. He had a weakness for champagne, but not for whisky, so that his falls from grace were swift and ebullient, and not of that slow,

simmering order that gradually reduces the brain to pulp. I did not envy Sally, but I ceased to pity her, as I had done early in the Winter, and I even felt encouraged to hope that increasing years and responsibilities might transform Dumpty into a respectable family man.

VII

THE day before my wedding Bobby arrived from Harvard. He had sent me a few lines on my engagement, but they were so formal that they left me in the dark as to his true attitude toward me as a sister-in-law. It was, therefore, with some trepidation that I went to receive him in the library. His greeting was:

"Hello, Syl!"

"Hello!" I answered, gauging my conduct carefully by his.

"You may kiss me," he said, presenting a downy cheek.

I availed myself of the privilege.

"I say, Syl," he continued, "it's a mercy you did not take me last Winter, when I went spoons on you. You would not have suited me one little bit. I like a woman to be feminine. Of course, I am awfully fond of you, my dear, but as a matter of taste I have outgrown the muscular girl."

"You like women to take life seriously?" I asked, beginning to guess how the wind was setting.

"That's it," said Bobby. "Women who take an interest in keeping a fellow straight."

"The sort of girl who makes you promise not to smoke more than one cigar a day, and takes you to church on Sundays?" I suggested, with deep respect in my tone.

"Exactly," agreed Bobby. "Tell me, how did you guess? Have you heard anything? About coming on in the train yesterday, for instance?" looking very conscious.

"No matter how I know," I answered, "but I make a guess the lady is in town with her mamma, and that if I send them invitations to the wedding it will only be what you have already agreed to do. I also guess that she is pale and dark-eyed, and her name—" I paused, wondering what the mischief I should invent for a name, but Bobby saved the situation by bursting in with:

"I see you know all about her. It is awfully kind of you to ask the May-flowers to the wedding, and I do think they would like to go. If you will just give me the invitations and a pile of cards I will shove them all in at the Waldorf when I go there this afternoon," and he presently departed to do the honors of his native town to the young lady of true feminine instincts.

Long may he worship at the shrine of this commendable person, but I fear another six weeks will find him under a new and quite dissimilar enchantment. I see in Bobby the elements of a male flirt, for he is so earnest and so fickle.

Who wants to read about a New York wedding? I hope no one, for mine was so heralded in the papers that I became shy about venturing outside of the house. I regretted being married in church, I regretted having a large breakfast afterward; indeed, I regretted everything that marked it as a function, until the door shut on Paul and me in the brougham and we started on that honeymoon which is only to end with our lives.



NO NEED TO WORRY

HE—Am I the only man you're engaged to?

SHE—Oh, no; but you mustn't let that discourage you. He is over seventy, and worth half a million.

BIBLIOLATRY

DEAR, love me not alone because my head
 With the bright gold of youth is garlanded,
 Nor yet because my mouth is warmly red
 And love presages;
 My beauty's but the title of the book—
 Sweetheart, I beg that you will deeper look
 Betwixt the pages.

For I would have you love the whole of me—
 The title and the book's entirety,
 The pages of the deathless poetry
 My soul sings clearly.
 When ruthless Time has marred the cover's gold
 Still will you love me—aye, because I'm old
 Love me more dearly.

ELISABETH R. FINLEY.



THE PLACE FOR THEM

MRS. NEWLYWED—Don't you think my biscuits are gems, my dear?
 MR. NEWLYWED—I do. You ought to put them in soak.



IMPORTANT TO KNOW

PERCY—What's the best way to make love to a girl?
 SHARP—That depends. Do you wish to marry her?



FEMININE FORTITUDE

FLORA—I feel sorry for poor Belle. Does she think her husband is
 better off?
 BESSIE—I don't know. She told me she was looking on the bright side.

AN AMERICAN DUCHESS

By Edgar Fawcett

WITH hair like silken bronze and tea-rose face,
Beside her spouse, the Duke, all willowy grace,

Behold her bloom, by many a gazer scanned,
Perched on the box-seat of his four-in-hand.

Two years a Duchess; yet you might declare
Her birth was regal, from that pose and air.

Men's hats are lifted; ladies' heads are bowed;
An affluent homage greets her from the crowd

Whose crest-engraven coaches, glittering, pass
Between the Park's grand elms and fragrant grass.

But always, following like the May wind's flow,
Murmurs the voice of gossip, swift or slow:

"A beauty, of course. You've heard the doleful tale;
Her marriage was the most revolting sale.

"From somewhere off in Yankeeland she came;
Nevada, Kansas—one forgets the name.

"Her father, out of penury's low lairs,
Had risen among the multi-millionaires.

"This Duke of Hull, besmirched, if not disclassed,
With ravaged income and notorious past,

"Roaming the States, in cold *ennui*, had seen
Her girlhood as it flowered at sweet eighteen.

"Daughter of slum-born upstarts, if you will,
Culture had trained her with triumphant skill.

"Fresh from a Paris *pension* did she gleam
On the Duke's jaded eyes like some rare dream.

"Then spoke the ambitious parents, deaf to shame:
'Three million dollars for your ducal name.'

"Hull mused an hour or two, then tossed them 'yes.'
They dragged her to the altar, passionless.

"And now? She loathes her lord, the cliques maintain;
Their boy, the little Earl of Dunsinane,

"Died four months old. They've had no children since.
I learn she's beamed on by some royal prince.

"But frost is tropic, if report speaks plain,
Compared with her indifference and disdain.

"Well, so it bides. You've heard what gossip tells
Touching the morals of these English swells.

" 'Wait' laugh the cynics; 'all her ice and snow
Will melt consentient in the over-glow

" 'Of sumptuous Mayfair and those reve's high
At castle and park and manor, by-and-by.'

"Look! that consummate horseman, Sir Guy Vane,
Close at her carriage wheel draws courteous rein.

"She nods and smiles; there's not a man in town
Wickeder than Sir Guy. Observe that frown

"Just flickering in the Duke's gaze, and no more;
He knows this London smart set to its core.

"*He* knows that here is not the sole Lord Guy
His glacial Duchess may be melted by.

" 'Dollars for dignities,' the bargain read;
'Twas clinched. What wonder now that he should dread

"Some shattering blow from circumstance?—espy
The insidious feet of Nemesis draw nigh? . . .

"Come, it grows damper as the sun droops low—
These treacherous Maytide evenings chill one so.

"Let us go out by Hyde Park Corner here.
The rhododendrons are superb this year."

LONDON, 1901.



SUCH A QUEER FELLOW

"CRANKER pays as he goes."
"Has plenty of money, eh?"
"No; merely eccentric."

THE LOVERS OF THE WORLD

By Edgar Saltus

LOVE we once defined as a fever that ends with a yawn. We are frequently in error, and we were then. Lucre we coincidentally defined as an incentive to matrimony. There, too, we were in error. But little mistakes of this nature have never disturbed our conscience. To err is highly literary. Besides, a man who is always right is a bore. If he does not send you to sleep he makes you feel ignorant, and either proceeding is very vulgar.

Our own ignorance is due to much learning. When we went to school we were taught everything it is easiest to forget. That is a long time ago. Scholars now have a wider fare. Instead of the mummeries of the classics, there are modern tongues, and football instead of history. That is all very well. But the menu is susceptible of improvement. Erudition is not endearing. It is not even smart. On the contrary, it is stupid to be wise all alone. A knowledge of languages, however superficial, does not teach you whom to visit and whom to avoid. A boy may develop into a polyglot and die a pauper. The majority of boys want to die rich. A girl may get to feel as much at home with Alfred the Great as if he were her first cousin, and remain a spinster. The majority of girls prefer matrimony. An acquaintance with Mithridates, and even with McKinley, does not help young people. They should be taught, not Who's Who, but What's What. And what is there but love and lucre?

Those two little things are the motor forces of Society. Beside them, barring the fashions and the charm of

médiance—we say *médiance* because it sounds so much more cosmopolitan than tittle-tattle—nothing else counts. Between them the first is outbalanced by the second. A German *privat docent* devoted his life to a study of the Greek dative. On his deathbed he regretted having chosen a field so wide. This is the age of specialization. The specialty of all specializations is coin. How to get it is what the schools should teach. When they do, their halls will stifle with striving scholars.

And naturally. Attic salt and its accompaniments are out of date. They bring no dignities; they open no doors. They are further handicapped by the contempt that Society has acquired for them. That contempt, while hardly of the kind which familiarity breeds, has been extended to everything not distinctly monied. Money does not mean brains. "There are," said Swift in one of his sermons, "three kinds of pride. There is the pride of birth, the pride of wealth and the pride of intellect. I shall not bother with the last," he added, "for there is none of it in this congregation." No, and there is none of it in Society, either. At entertainments to which the press gives prominence there never appears on the list of guests a single individual distinguished by pride of this nature. There is not a patriot, there is not a philosopher, there is not a poet. There are, it is true, precious few of them. Yet they exist. But never on the lists of ball-givers.

That is quite as it should be. There is nothing more subversive than a young poet, except an old one.

Philosophers have attentions for everybody and attractions for none. We admire patriots and avoid them with care. Their omission, therefore, is quite justified. Yet it is not due to these reasons, but to the fact that Society is recruited not from those who think, but from those who don't. Conveniently, it may be likened to a club where membership is obtainable, not by reason of merit, but money. As a consequence, though Society used to sin and sparkle, now it sins and yawns. There is modern progress.

In spite of which—or, perhaps, precisely on that account—there are men, otherwise sensible, whom its lack of recognition renders hydrophobic. We have beheld specimens of them foam at the mouth. We have understood that it kept their wives awake. We have been told that it gave their daughters nightmares. Quite unavailing, too. Insomnia does not appeal to Society. Sense, either. Philosophy and verse attract it as little as do hydrophobia and nightmares. The German whom we have cited might have been able to take his little dative in his lap, and the feat would not gain him a nod in passing. Nothing would, except money.

There is the Open Sesame. Beauty, breeding, brains and bravery may be talked away, yet never bank accounts. However obtained, they are holy. A man may be ignorant as a carp, he may be stupid as the Koran, and if he be quite rich he is quite welcome. If he is not rich, then, though he were a Shakespeare, a Rubens and a Mozart rolled into one, he will remain but a bounder.

To be modish you must have money. Even in genteel poverty there is no gentility now. The worship of what clergymen call the fatted calf—or is it the golden one?—never was more ardent. That calf sits in the woof of every dream. He stands at the goal of every ambition. He has Nebuchadnezzared the country. His fleece is as adored in Society as his fleecing is loved in the Street. Yet has a calf a fleece? No matter. The tortuousness of

trusts, the manipulation of pools, the intuition we all have that if we fail to look out we won't fail to be let in, the conviction that, give them a chance and those you do will do you up, the sweet suspicion of surreptitiousness everywhere—these things, others, too, lead statisticians like ourselves to but one conclusion—the majority of those who are not out for all they can get are dead, insane or decrepit.

It is for this reason we suggest that schools should throw over football and languages and in their stead establish chairs on Lucre. If to these they would add others on Love, the curriculum would be simply perfect. These two little things are, as we have noted, the motor forces of Society. Instruction regarding them is highly diverting, too. To be rich seems quite complex. Any millionaire will tell you it is quite easy. To love and to be loved seem very simple. Any lover will tell you it is just the reverse.

And so it is. It is the devil's own job. Those who have practiced it best have suffered most. Look at the history of the *Grandes Amou-reuses*. As pages turn and faces emerge, always if they do not drip with tears they reek with blood, always you catch the echo of the refrain, *Je suis l'Amour, prends garde à toi*.

Sappho heard it. In another tongue, of course, yet in her pretty little ears such was the sob of it that to drown it she drowned herself. The breaths of song that blew through Mitylene could not console her. The possibility of future Leanders could not console Hero, either. She drowned herself, also. She, too, heard that refrain. Through the rushes of the Nile it floated to Cleopatra. As it sounded there so did it sound at Joyeuse Garde, at Tintagel and at Astolat. Guinevere heard it. It hushed her to death as it hushed Ysult, as it hushed Elaine. Then upward with the stream it passed through all the stunning tragedies of Italy and all the splendid treacheries of France. It is a very affecting refrain, but it does not make you much in love with

love. Nothing does, for that matter, except the absence of it. When lovers get over loving each other, how lovely love can be! It is the betwixts and the betweenes that make you wish that you had never been born. A man may have a dozen affairs. He may have a hundred. If luck be with him, and the incentive, too, he may have a thousand. But in all the world there is but one woman for whom that man can really care. And here is the pathos of it. Let that woman's love for him exceed his own for her, and the surfeit of sweets is too much for him. He can't stand it. On the other hand, if she have no affection for him, there he is, a miserable being for the rest of his wretched life.

It is for the better avoidance of just such a *contretemps* as this that men, and women, too, have accepted love without returning any. *Faust* does not waltz with the *prima donna assoluta* or *dissoluta* to the claptrap of Gounod alone. *Don Juan* is not a creation of Byron or even of Molière. Richardson did not invent *Lovelace*, any more than *Lothario* is an invention of Rowe. Men like these are of all epochs. Casanova is one of them.

Casanova promenaded through palace and cottage, convent and inn, cathedral and garret, inveigling in the course of that promenade three thousand women—princesses and soubrettes, abbesses and ballet girls, matrons and maids. That promenade, which was a continuous sin, he has recited at length in his memoirs. During the recital you see a hideous old man fumbling in a box in which are faded ribbons, rumpled notes, souvenirs and *gages d'amour*. And as he fumbles them you hear him mumble: "Can this be the handkerchief of Sestina? What has tarnished the duchess's necklace? Where is the glove that belonged to Elvire? And this picture of the child who gave me her youth—what can have blackened it so?" One may fancy *Faust*, slippered and slovenly, as revoltingly engaged. Richelieu was another of the same type, but redder-heeled, more

régence and, if possible, more depraved.

Another was Byron—the author of a hundred masterpieces and a thousand crimes. Of a thousand and one, perhaps. Those he did not commit the imagination of certain ladies supplied. Just what they were we lack the space to tell, the art, too, independent of the imagination. To persons more censorious than ourselves morality appears to consist in having improper thoughts of other people. Ladies of this genteel mentality have refused Byron their countenance. As he always spoke highly of them, it is regrettable that the compliment was not returned. But perhaps both were in error. Such things have happened. The point, however, is elsewhere, or rather, it is here. For the crimes he committed, and even for the crimes he did not commit, but which, it may be, he contemplated, Byron would deserve marks identical in blackness with those we have credited to Casanova and Richelieu, were it not that through them all he passed with the saving grace of genius. Genius is so rare that much should be forgiven it. Unfortunately, however, genius does not forgive itself. In the sodden nights at Venice and the ashen days that ensued, when the poet added to his lyre black hairs and blonde, distilling from his cups enchanting accords, staggering, as did de Musset, with a hiccough into immortality—in those days and nights when he tried first to deaden and then to drown the vultures that battened on his unequalled mind, you have but another of the terrible tales with which the Book of Love is strewn. Yet how shall it matter? As someone, a medium, possibly, understood him, after Missolonghi, to say to his wife:

I have outsoared the shadow of your
night,
Envy and calumny and hate and
blame;
And that unrest which I have called de-
light
Shall touch me not, nor torture me
again.

Rather scathing lines, to come from a dead man! But then, do not the possibilities of verse transcend the tomb?

Still another on this list is Lola Montez. Whether or not she was related to Byron is uncertain. There are matters that history prefers to ignore rather than to elucidate. Concerning her father it is dumb. What is said of Lola was told so long ago that, although there are fossils as yet unextinct who saw her appear as *Mazeppa* in the Broadway Theatre, already she has retreated into the magnificence of myth. To the great majority Lola Montez is a contemporary of Semiramis. To the great unwashed she is unknown. There is an epoch, however—one relatively quite recent—in which, after pirouetting through an insurrection in Warsaw, she danced into Bavaria and kicked over a throne.

A ballerine so energetic does not deserve to be instantly forgot. Besides, she was a very pretty woman. In the picture gallery at Munich she looks a little as Psyche must have looked when she lost her god. There the resemblance begins and ends. There was nothing melancholy in her disposition, nothing tender, nothing true. She was last of the *Grandes Amoureuses* who lived when the world was larger, when there were no railways, no telegraph poles and no cant. Born in Limerick, educated in Calcutta, she took Europe for her province and died in New York. Her parentage was as variegated as her career. Sir Edward Gilbert, the husband of her mother, was an Irishman, and his wife, Dolores de Montalvo, descended from a Hispano-Moorish family, which, because of the Arab admixture, lacked what is known on the Peninsula as the *sangre azul*, the blue blood of which the hidalgo alone may boast. Even so, that which Lola acquired was so heady that at fourteen she eloped. Developing subsequently into Countess of Lansfeld, she disturbed kings, disturbed kingdoms, disturbed even California,

and died on Long Island, very miserably, leaving nothing save a few echoes, of which the subsidence is now complete.

But not the moral of those echoes. There is in them the same bitterness which you may catch in the echoes that descend from Casanova, from Richelieu, from Byron; that bitterness which Sappho called the bitterness of things too sweet. We know of no digestion with which it has agreed. Whether, as was the case with Sappho, you seek love and fail to find it; or whether, as was the case with Casanova, you take it and give nothing in return; or whether, as was the case with Byron, you give and receive as well, the bitterness is the same. The dose may vary according to temperament, but the gall is unchanged, the taste is there, the refrain, too—*Je suis l'Amour, prends garde à toi*.

Just why this should be we do not know, otherwise we would tell. We scorn to have a secret from our readers. We know merely that, for some reason beyond our ken, in the House of Life Venus is afflicted. We know that, apart from fiction and the fabulous, there is not a single story of happily begun and happily ending love which a self-respecting upper-housemaid would credit. In the circumstances, a chair that shall teach how to construe *Amo, amas*, is, we think, in order. Yet while we are advocating it we can't let go the other on Lucre.

These things, as we have already twice noted, constitute the main-springs of Society. Those to whom they appeal are the Lovers of the World, of the Flesh, it may be, and perhaps, too, of the Devil. For conjointly they represent happiness; and do we not know that happiness is a myth invented by Satan for our despair? Yet though we know that, we know, too, that in the pursuit of it we shall never tire. And naturally. We are born with a thirst for it. In vain it escapes us. We will not listen to its refusals. We count on its return. To our last breath we demand that it

shall. We are obstinate with it. Obstinate with a will-o'-the-wisp! *O bêtise humaine!*

Such is human nature—or, rather, such is human stupidity. That we may not be charged with cynicism we

hasten to add that we did not invent it. It is the appanage, the birthmark, the distinguishing trait of all true Lovers of the World.

(And of the Flesh.)

(And of the Devil.)



AND YET—

I QUESTION if I wholly love you, dear,
If in my life you play the greater part,
And yet—I should be very loath to hear
That any other woman held your heart.

I chatter gaily with the careless throng,
I laugh and jest with others half the day,
And yet—the hours are somehow overlong
Until you chance to pass along the way.

I like to try the cross-moves in life's game,
To warm my hands at all the little fires,
And yet—when you cold disapproval claim,
Beneath your scorn my pleasure quickly tires.

I fret sometimes at foolish, trifling things,
At wisdom wrapt in guise of penalty,
And yet—the blackest of my woes take wings
When I am sure of your warm sympathy.

I have no fear of death as endless sleep,
Close hid between the darkness and the dew,
And yet—if there were consciousness to keep,
I know I could not bear it without you.

CHARLOTTE BECKER.



BETTER THAN SOME SERMONS

THE PASTOR—Did you get any good out of my sermon to-day?

FAIR MEMBER—No, sir; but it might have been worse. I didn't get anything bad from it.

AN OBSTINATE IF

MY wife and I quite well agree
 In all artistic matters;
 Our tastes are quite in harmony
 On plaques and plates and platters;
 And so we need no one's advice
 To make home bright and sunny;
 'Twould be a perfect paradise—
 If Molly had the money!

A "den" she'd have for me alone,
 A study like her pastor's,
 With Persian rugs to give it tone,
 And just a few "old masters."
 With tireless zeal she'd hunt around,
 As bees do after honey,
 The shops where bric-à-brac is found—
 If Molly had the money!

What Sèvres, Wedgwood, Dresden, Delf,
 Might grace our china closet,
 Were shopmen guided not by pelf
 To ask advance deposit!
 Erasmus might our bookshelves grace,
 And Cruikshank's pictures funny—
 In short, we'd have a home-like place—
 If Molly had the money!

ROY FARRELL GREENE.



A SEVERE ATTACK

MAUDE—Chappie is in love.

BELLE—Much in love?

"Must be. They say he is conscious of it."



GOOD REASON TO THINK

SHE—He says he thought twice before he married her.

HE—Very likely. He was engaged to another girl at the time.

IN PALACE GARDENS

By Julien Gordon

(Mrs. Van Rensselaer Cruger)

POOR Bob Taintor was already on his last legs. Growing daily more pallid and wasted, he was still dignified, in his white cravat and dress coat, though his hands trembled when his little wife allowed him to act as convoy. There were miserable evenings when he was not visible; and her observing friends knew, by the downward droop of her lip and the restlessness of her eye, that the old devil had hold of him again. The old devil! that elusive, furtive, unknowable, indefensible devil! that awful curse which had driven him out of every job, broken up every project, closed every avenue of profit, sapped capital and wrecked investment, until at last, brought to bay, he was slowly dying in Italy on his wife's petty resources!

From his father, a distinguished American sculptor, he had inherited genius without its audacity. It is one talent that executes, another that places. Taintor had the first capacity, but not the second. He hewed charming things out of the dazzling marbles of Carrara, and they remained on his hands. Men of far less ability sold their statues; his were passed over. He had no knack at buttonholing the traveling Philistine. With discouragement had come the thirst for forgetfulness. The curse—always a lure—had mastered him.

They had an apartment in a great, dark palazzo—few rooms, but lofty and wide. There was a frescoed boudoir Mrs. Taintor showed with pride, which led into a bowered, terraced place. This hanging garden, with its stone seats and tables, was

full of sunlight in the day, of mystery at night. It decided them to accept many inconveniences, which were carefully concealed from friends. They had, on reaching Florence, “descended” at a hotel, where they spent in six months their whole year's income, and had very poor things to eat. Frightened, they fled to a *pension*. It was extremely cheap; but poor Taintor's devil alarmed its pale spinsters and dejected widows, and the landlady requested them to “look further.” So, after a brief parley, Mrs. Taintor moved her husband, Meg and the boxes to the old palazzo in the Via Santo Spirito. Her husband's *atelier* was in a stable opposite—a great, splendid, half-ruined place once the abode of the Medici. They concluded that for Meg the privacy of a home would have unusual advantages. Dolly had been told by an old lady long resident in Florence that the hotels and *pensions* were the playground of unscrupulous and adventurous young Italians in quest of *dots*, and that these were unfeasible and dangerous company for inexperienced young women. When Dolly Taintor ingenuously remarked, “But our child will have no *dot*,” Donna Clara had looked at once so pitying and contemptuous that she said no more. She had left her profoundly impressed with two facts: that her child was in peril, and that the depths of Italian perversity had not yet been sounded. “Look well after her and yourself, my dear. You might be taken for twenty and are hugely pretty;” then Donna Clara had wagged her head and gazed into

space over her eyeglasses. "I know," said Dolly, faintly, "that in Europe chaperonage is indispensable. Her papa and I, one or both of us, are always with Meg, who is a very serious girl. As for me, why, nobody ever looks at me twice." At which the old lady had emitted a sound something between a snore and a snort, full of hidden meaning, as if announcing dark possibilities.

"I am not only *passée*, I am *re-passée*," said Dolly, laughing.

"Fiddle-de-dee!" said her friend.

Mrs. Taintor had an anxious character and a nervous little brain. She went down the damp, narrow street with a weight of responsibility upon her. What if, in thus trying to save her husband, her girl should be sacrificed and come to harm!

On one particular afternoon she and Meg, in their smartest frocks and best hats, were arrayed for the garden party at the Princess Corsini's. All unpleasant forebodings were dispelled. Bob, with a new brown derby and new shoes, was waiting, standing in elastic elegance, to put his women into the cab and hoist himself to the narrow front seat. And so away they flew—a bright smile on the pink and white face of Dolly, proud of her dainty bonnet and her girl's loveliness.

Mrs. Taintor was certainly pretty, with a childlike, appealing prettiness that even constant suffering and sleepless apprehension failed to mar. The sadness on her lips, in fact, added interest to a countenance otherwise *banal*.

Dolly had the temperament that would have made of her a successful "lazy, laughing, languid Jenny, fond of a kiss and fond of a guinea." Instead of this congenial career, she had contented herself with conjugal affection and domestic cares, her child's kisses and very few guineas. Her imagination—we will call it fancy, for the first word is somewhat overstrained—ran riot constantly. In it she lived a life of pleasure, of which the chief note was the ring of coin. Between that life and her there loomed a

year or two of black dresses and becoming crêpe veils, when, as an interesting widow, she should return to America. Here, a bachelor of enormous wealth—satisfied to collect art treasures, not to create them—was at once to succumb to her pathetic charm. Sometimes he had the distinct personality of an old acquaintance, in whose fidelity she had a naïve belief; sometimes he was the "new man" that every woman dreams about when the present one is unsatisfactory. After a brief delay, not devoid of allurements, this person was to lead her to the altar, his wedding gift to her being a large dowry for Meg. She felt she should be ashamed if Meg returned among her schoolmates without that aureole of European success calculated to dazzle and rout them. With this dowry the foreign nobleman

But the cab here violently turned into the Via Garibaldi, and the jar almost sent poor Bob to the curb. Her dreams at least made her quite happy, and Bob, who adored her, was delighted to see her smile.

He handed the ladies out gallantly, his hands encased in a pair of light gloves, which he had got cheap because they were a size too large for him.

The Princess, distant and *distracte*, vaguely waved them, after her salutations, to the *loggia* and gardens. They would find there, she told them, the greater number of her guests. She did not know their names, and only indistinctly remembered having met them at one of Donna Clara's Wednesdays. The two had been huddled toward her *en masse* by their amiable hostess. She had got rid of them by a murmured invitation to her garden party. After this she had forgotten them.

They, however, had not forgotten. She now tapped the Marchese di Formosa on the shoulder with her lorgnon, and asked: "Who is that girl?"

"What girl?" said the Marchese.

"The tall, thin one in the *grand chapeau*."

The Marchese stared through his

monocle at the backs of Mrs. Taintor and Meg, who were sauntering with as much aplomb as they could muster through the rows of statues, down the flower-bordered paths.

He was going to say he didn't know, this being less trouble and always safe, but on longer inspection, said he: "Why, *questa signora* is my tenant. I rented them the *terzo piano*, since Guido's wife prefers to stay at Campi. Luigi's, who is a Slav, with *le diable au corps*, must always be on the road; and the rats were making holes in the walls of our empty house."

"English?"

"No; American, I imagine."

"The girl is *très bien*," said the Princess.

"Here, you big lout!" He seized a youth by the lapel of his coat and pulled him to the Princess. "Permit my boy Gino to kiss your hand, *cara principessa*."

"Fancy," said the Princess, smiling, "little Gino being taller than you are! *Dieu*, what a young giant! Why, when I last saw him he was playing at marbles in the Pergola at Campi, in a blouse and short socks."

The young Marchese stooped with awkward grace and pressed his warm lips on the Princess's pale fingers.

"There is a nice-looking American girl who has just passed into the garden with her mother," she said to him. "Go and ask them to come in and have some tea. I don't know if they have acquaintances. Your papa says they live in Palazzo Formosa."

"But I have not met them," said Gino, with languor. His languor was affected, for his disposition was fiery. But he was touched by that effort at the *blasé* of modern Italy.

"Get introduced," said the Princess. "Here is Donna Clara dying to make people happy." She turned to speak to an elderly lady who, covered with fine laces, was painfully advancing, supported by a cane.

"And how is the rheumatism, dear?" asked the Princess, with solicitude. "Shall you make the Aix cure?"

Donna Clara caught Gino on the wing, and at his unenthusiastic request presented him to the Taintor party.

"Glad to meet you, sir," said Taintor, shaking hands.

"We've seen you so often, smoking cigarettes in the garden court," said Dolly, who was a trifle gushing.

Meg bowed coldly and said nothing.

He had once met her on the stairs, and had eagerly longed to repeat the experience. He thought her exquisitely beautiful. She was hardly that, yet she was very handsome; tall, straight, a wisp of slender girlhood, with her great, flashing, proud eyes and her abundant blue-black hair. She had already absorbed into her blood that sweetness of rich, ripe fruit which Italy bestows on those who drink in her intoxicating juices, and which her mother's plump little person lacked the suppleness to absorb.

Mrs. Taintor remained "New England." Her husband—who was not from Springfield—often laughed at her Yankee forms of expression, when she "felt like fury" or didn't know "as" she should like a thing. Her duties were also performed with the somewhat heavy consciousness of ineradicable Puritan bias. It was only in temperament that Dolly was facile. Her heart was Christian and self-sacrificing. Meg was different. The old world had got into her young bones. She was never like her mother, eager or fussy, but full of a *farouche* dignity and repose.

"Darling," she said to her mother, when the tea and cakes had been disposed of, the last word said, and they bowled home again across the Ponte alla Trinità through the dusk; "darling, why did you tell that boy you had watched him from our balcony?"

Mrs. Taintor flushed. "I didn't think there was any harm," she said.

"It might have flattered him."

"Pshaw!" said her father, who was preparing to make an excuse to go back for vermouth to Doney's. "He looks like a fool."

"I thought him perfectly fascinating," said Dolly.

"Oh, he is a mere baby—only twenty," said Meg.

"And has been amusing himself in the streets and drawing-rooms and clubs of Florence for several years, when our men would be at their schooling. Isn't it extraordinary?"

"Damned fools, all of them," murmured Bob, whose thirst had become intolerable. "Children are endless trouble—with girls it is *dots*, with boys it is debts."

II

HAVING contracted a habit of thinking aloud, Mrs. Taintor sometimes initiated Meg into knowledge forbidden to the European *jeunes filles*. She called these inconvenient members of society "J. F's." "I am chaperoning my J. F.," was one of her favorite excuses to detaining friends. It must be confessed that the small lady's ideas on the subject were of an order so crude and unsophisticated that they roused Donna Clara—a good-natured American woman married to an Italian—to many a hearty laugh.

"The morals of the men here are just too horrid!" Dolly would say, in an awed whisper. And she would then glibly recount tales of such extraordinary turpitude that they surprised Florentine ladies admitted to her revelations. They would raise their hands in deprecating horror—yet with an odd conviction, as they gazed at Mrs. Taintor's candid forehead and baby mouth, that she hardly could comprehend the import of her own words. Donna Clara did once warn her that this indiscreet form of gossip might bring Meg into trouble. Dolly drew herself up with all the hauteur of an offended pigeon, and assured her mentor that she was "prudent to a fault."

Meg took such scattered stories more to heart. She felt distressed and sad when she remembered them. Yet she was, on the whole, a happy girl, save for the one bitter trouble, and did not allow an early cynicism to mar her faiths and her ideals. Nevertheless, these impressions gave her

a freedom of speech, a maturity of manner, that were not always understood.

Gino explained that his sister-in-law was in the country with her babies during the cruise of the naval officer, his elder brother. "She hates the world," he said.

"Dear me! we love it," Mrs. Taintor answered, laughing into the young man's eyes.

"You are made for it," said Gino, gallantly; "so beautiful!"

"Oh, I am getting quite an old woman," she replied, waiting for his denial. To look successful is one of the few pleasures left to disappointed hope. Her longing for admiration and for love was such that even when these were the result of her husband's over-excitement, his fuddled compliments were received with a certain complacency. They would have angered and disgusted a stronger woman, being a species of sop to her exhausted indulgence.

Gino's cigarettes were now smoked once a week in the Taintors' drawing-rooms or on their terrace; then twice a week, then daily. At last, more than once a day the young man appeared at their door.

"What's this tomfoolery for?" Bob would mutter, when he was a fit questioner.

Mrs. Taintor bridled.

"He is the most *à la mode* fellow of the town. His attentions have given Meg a lot of prestige."

"Much good it'll do her!"

"Now, don't be cross. The child doesn't get much fun."

If he loved his wife, he idolized his daughter. He was silent, with that dumbness which hid its shaft of self-reproach. What did *he* do for his beloved?

Dolly saw her advantage.

"He is a nice boy. He gave her every one of his favors at Donna Clara's dance. It set the pace. She just swept off everything."

"Not quite everything, darling," cried out Meg from the library, where she was sitting on the floor, playing with the cat. "Pussy, pussy," she

was saying, "you look exactly like me. You are thin and black, and your eyes flash in the light like coals, and you are sometimes naughty and like to scratch, and won't let people touch you, and scream if they dare." But she did not know herself very well. She was not feline.

"Well, nearly," cried back her mother. "Besides," she added to Bob, *sotto voce*, "Meg doesn't care for him the least bit."

"I should hope not," replied Taintor.

When she said the same thing to Donna Clara she was surprised at this lady's answer.

"And pray," said Donna Clara, "what do you know about it?"

"I should think I must know the sentiments of my own flesh and blood."

"Fol-de-rol!" said Donna Clara; "you can't tell anything about girls."

"Not about my own?" with wide eyes.

"Not about your own. Youth, my dear, has reserves and dignities that middle age loses."

Dolly winced. "Perhaps you are right," she said, not without melancholy.

She decided to question Meg more searchingly.

"I wouldn't have the fellow about so much; people will talk," said Donna Clara.

"Why, what could they say?"

"A great many things, my dear, you wouldn't care to hear."

It is difficult to vanity to accept the fact that people never say of our affairs what they ought, or what we wish they would.

"I am always with her."

"What does that amount to?"

"Why, it protects her."

"Bah! you dear, lively kitten. Do you know what it means to an intriguing mother to 'protect' her girl?" said Donna Clara. "You speak of 'chaperoning' as you would of eating a muffin or drawing on your slipper. Do you think it consists in letting that enamored youth hang about your girl from morning till evening?—an utterly ineligible *parti*, since he will

inherit nothing but debts. Do you know what to pilot a girl skilfully through the seasons of European cities actually *means*? what deep insight, profound cunning, Machiavelian scheming, heart-eating weariness? You dear little thing, you are most amusing!"

"They say the Contessa Rinbotti is one of that sort," said Mrs. Taintor, somewhat nettled.

"She'll catch husbands for her girls," said Donna Clara, laconically. "Bianca is already fiancée to Chigi, and her *dot* is as slender as her waistband."

"Meg has none at all. We have no such idea. There are hundreds of rich men in America who would be glad enough to marry her. We don't want her to leave us. Her father wouldn't desire an Italian, in any case."

"Then you shouldn't bring your girl to Italy," said Donna Clara, decidedly. "These men are most attractive, and believe me, my dear, in matters of love they are our masters."

"Meg is all common sense," said Mrs. Taintor; "there is no danger." She had an aggrieved feeling that her sorrows could not be dwelt on to this happy old woman, whose husband never took too much wine. She was loyal to hers, and never complained of him. But God knew why they had left America. And then she had been so pleased with Meg's conquest! Say what they would, it had helped on their Winter. Some of the other mothers had cast dagger glances. Some of the other girls had pined. Gino was the very flower of the *jeunesse dorée*, if his gilding was a trifle worn; and the foolish woman clung to her captive with the stubborn blindness of mediocre intelligence. "It's all envy and malice," she thought. "The nasty things hate Meg because she's such a belle."

III

THE Marchese *père* was much occupied. After his wife's death—which he had lamented with loud outcries,

threats of suicide, and a splendid tombstone; once every year he laid a wreath thereon—he had lived for a time in seclusion. Now he had emerged. He was occupied paying court to a rich Austrian widow, quarreling with his mistress about it—a popular actress on whom he had squandered half his fortune—playing for high stakes at the *Cercle dei Nobili*, and standing for hours at street corners. When the races were on there was some betting, and in September pheasants to shoot. His sons took up but a meagre portion of his time. He had got the older ones established; Gino he kept near him for company. They rarely met, except at such meals as were eaten at home. They passed each other at the club, or kissed each other for good-morning at the elder man's bedside when he drank his coffee. This was the hour when the younger one came, in his dressing-gown, to ask for money or to admit ill-luck at cards. They were both fond of gambling, as behooved their rank and station.

Everything leaks out in Italy, as everybody is curious and talkative. And when the Marchese had the leisure to listen he was told of his son's incendiary courtship of his American tenants. Having discovered through the United States Consul that there was no fortune, he felt it time to interfere.

He resolved to execute a flank movement and surprise the unsuspecting enemy. He managed to have himself let in, unannounced, to their apartment one evening by a *lira* to the buttons who stood guard at the door. He was rewarded for his strategy. He had plans and projects of his own for Gino, and he didn't intend any nonsense to clash with them.

As the drawing-room door was thrown open, this is what the Marchese saw: Asleep, or half-asleep, on a sofa sprawled Bob Taintor. At the centre table, by the light, sat Dolly. Before her eyes was spread a copy of *Town Topics*. Behind, in shadow, their noses within an inch of each

other, her hand in his, stood two tall figures, intent and absorbed.

Gino and Meg started asunder, visibly embarrassed.

"Ah, it is papa," murmured Gino, and turning to his parent: "I was just bidding mademoiselle good evening. I have an engagement with Alfredo at the club to-night."

He shook hands with Mrs. Taintor, saying, with a smile, "I will not bring Mr. Taintor back from his paradise of dreams," and was gone.

The Marchese, with infinite grace, sank into a seat. He was most amiable and suave, and complimented the ladies on the taste with which they had arranged (in his eyes, disfigured) the drawing-room. He tried to converse with the dry-tongued, dishevelled host, who was extremely polite and succinct, with an utterance painfully precise, indicative of a phase not unknown to his unfortunate womenkind. His call was just long enough, and he left them persuaded of his admiration and respect.

"So, so, Monsieur Gino," he said to himself, as he nervously twisted his waxed mustache and with a grimace dropped the monocle from his eye, "so, so! hem—hem! You think to get into scrapes with penniless and *mal-élevées* girls, while della Torre's daughter waits your good pleasure, and I pay your card debts once a month and your tailor's extra bills!" An American would have considered them very small bills indeed, but these matters are comparative.

The scene that had met his gaze had quite horrified him. A frivolous mother, a half-tipsy father, a girl without shame. He had himself run the gamut, since he was fourteen—when the priests made a drum of his head by their incessant cuffs and buffets—of every male dissipation. His standard had not suffered. In this the Latin is naïvely illogical. Narrow, ignorant and prejudiced, the Marchese di Formosa had rules of conduct. He was, moreover, adroit, shrewd and wily. He proved it by saying to his son, late that night:

"That is a very charming girl upstairs."

Now, Gino knew his father fairly well, and was not himself devoid of trickiness. He was on his guard.

"So, so," he said, carelessly.

"What is this generation made of!" exclaimed the Marchese. "At your age I should have been on fire if such a *demoiselle* had accorded me favors."

Gino saw this was a trap. His vanity would have allowed any woman calumniated to feed it without violent protest. But his love—which in the Italian becomes perfidious only when it is baffled or dismissed—was entirely sincere. In a vague way he meant well by Meg. This soft philandering, so new to his experience, intoxicated him. He liked its dalliance. Gino had, however, that instant perception of the future, its difficulties and its problems, which Anglo-Saxons lose in moments of emotion. The Italian's senses may be inflamed, his heart engaged; his brain remains unclouded. It never sleeps.

"There have been no—favors," he said, testily. It was still possible that his father, being near-sighted and the room dark, had not seen that lingering touch of parting. If he had, it was unfortunate. Gino did not make light of it.

"She is *bellissima* and she looks intelligent," said the Marchese, civilly. "And the mother, too, is pretty. The father——"

Gino flushed. He had felt much ashamed that his father should arrive on a "bad" night.

The Italian is temperate. He looks upon an *ivrogne* with impatient scorn. He has no scientific indulgence, which pities and pardons.

"She is intelligent," said Gino. "American girls are extraordinary. We do not understand them."

It must be admitted that this intellect of Meg's secretly alarmed him. He viewed it as one would horns or a hump—some entirely external accident of birth, whose amputation might be advisable on the ground of the normal. Yet its existence gave a certain augustness to the possessor—

like the horns of Moses, or the traditional hump whose contact brings good luck.

"Have you seen la della Torre lately?" his father asked, throwing off the ashes of his cigarette from his long, polished nail and eyeing his son sharply.

"No," said Gino.

"Why not?" said the Marchese.

"*Mi secca.*"

His father rose and walked to the mantel shelf.

"*E questi mi seccano.*" He twisted a long paper, on which were some writing and figures, held it to the candle and at its flame relit his cigarette. The charred remains fell into the grate. He stamped them out with his heel. Gino's nose lengthened.

"Good-night," said his father, shortly, and left the room.

Gino went out into the garden. He was very miserable. He knew that Signorina Nerina della Torre, with her dowry and her golden hair, was his for the asking. He knew that her parents ardently desired the alliance, and that in the end he should probably have to yield. The resistance born of independence, or of the means of compassing it, was undreamed of by the young aristocrat. To work, in his view, was a hideous blot on one's escutcheon. It did not enter the range of possibility.

He now looked up at Meg's window with a sense of infinite sorrow. There was no light. "*Buon riposo, angelo mio!*" He did not look at the moon or at the flowers. The Italian has little imagination, no love of nature. His taste for art is an instinct of the blood, his fondness for beauty a pulse of the intellect. But the rapture brought by the sounds and smells of gardens, the hum of Summer insects, the dream of earth's loveliness, are not to him palpitating realities. An admirable frame, perhaps, to an intrigue of gallantry or a poem of passion, but in themselves insignificant and unimportant.

He came back into the house. At twenty it is difficult not to be influ-

enced by the opinions of our elders—particularly difficult to the young European, to whom parental authority must be paramount. To escape it by standing behind a banker's counter or in a lawyer's office never would have crossed Gino's consciousness. He had not been educated for the army; in fact, he had no aptitude for any career save that of gentlemanly *flâneur*. He had not been duped by his father's admiration of Meg's comeliness. He secretly felt that the Marchese thought her light. There was no indignation in the reflection—not, at least, for her—only inasmuch as it might affect himself. That the woman he admired above all others should be held in disregard, possibly with reason, wounded his self-love. It also awoke a new and very tangible form of suffering. An acute jealousy, not yet anger, against her—for jealousy only becomes anger with proof of unfaithfulness—awoke in his breast. Its pang sent him to disturbed slumbers, in which was the added sting of his father's repudiation of his bill for *petits soupers*.

IV

A WOMAN'S reproaches detach a man; her silence detaches her. In mystic fashion Mrs. Taintor realized this. She had long ago ceased to reproach her husband. Men are stupid. They will not understand that women's words of anger are but a question of the circulation of the blood. Taintor's tenderness for his women—the only influence that kept him from lower depths—was, she felt, important. Mrs. Taintor had read Tolstói's "Katia," and had concluded that to be in love with a man after twenty years of marriage was unusual and impracticable. She had certainly borne enough, she told herself, to have reached and be excusable for disillusion. Her self-pity, however, did not rob her of solicitude for him, and even of a measure of affection—an affection that still "looked after" him. There was always the agony

lest others should see his humiliation. To bear with patience this burden for twenty years should be enough to pacify those malevolent spirits that need to be glutted by human sacrifice. Mrs. Taintor was unwilling to accept her trouble as the direct boon of a friendly providence.

When she was bursting with a resistless need for sympathy she generally went to see her friend, Miss Sterett. Miss Sterett was a New England spinster whom Mrs. Taintor had known well in youth. She was studying art in Italy. She looked like a little smoked herring. She had a snub nose and the prominent jaw that Lombroso bestows only on criminals. It is, in fact, often a feature of excellent and harmless persons. Her eyes were kindly and even handsome, but always concealed by spectacles. She painted, from morning till night, views of Florence, which she sold to travelers for a few *lire*. She thus added to an income otherwise insufficient, even for her bird-like wants. There was about as much art in her pictures as there would have been in the mixing of a whortleberry pie. But such as they were, they served their purpose. For all her lack of perception of color and form, Miss Sterett was no fool. She was a woman of brain and of heart. Mrs. Taintor found her sympathetic. In her dull, small, shabby *atelier* the apparition of these gayer butterflies came as a blessing; the shimmer of their bright wings seemed to leave a trail of golden haze behind.

"And then," Mrs. Taintor would say to Meg, "Matilda Sterett is not exacting. She doesn't expect to be invited."

She toiled up the stone steps to-day to the fourth story, wondering why we generally make our best confidences to people we do not ask to our best parties. If this can be answered through psychic analysis, Dolly had not reached the keynote of the question when she landed, panting and overheated, at her friend's door.

She felt a trifle irritated. It is difficult not to feel cross with persons who

live up more flights than are convenient.

Miss Sterett kept no servant. A *femme de ménage* came in to give her meals. She opened her door herself.

To her alone did Mrs. Taintor ever speak of her marital misfortunes. To her also she could throw off all reserve in ringing the praises of her girl. She enjoyed above all else this quiet hour, when all she said was believed and all she withheld was understood. Miss Sterett had escaped selfishness—that peril of the solitary.

"It has been dreadful, lately," Dolly said, throwing off her light wrap and sitting down on a low chair, drawn to the fading light.

"I am sorry," said Matilda, gently.

"Dreadful! Sometimes it seems as if I couldn't put up with it."

"There is Meg to console you," said Miss Sterett, encouragingly; "she's all comfort."

"Oh, you can't tell what she is to me—to him!" Dolly's eyes filled with sudden tears.

"Yes, I can." Miss Sterett shook her head.

"The young Marchese is more devoted than ever. He comes every day."

"They are beautiful together," said Matilda. She once had taken tea and seen the lover.

"But, of course, it is quite hopeless—quite. Meg has been forced to refuse his offer of marriage." This was not quite true; but what is the use of friends who won't take our children's chances at our own valuation?

"Dear me," said Matilda Sterett, "what a pity!"

"Oh, I don't know," said Mrs. Taintor, secretly ravished, but outwardly careless; "Meg has had lots of offers, and much more brilliant ones, in America before she ever went out."

"And, of course, you would prefer an American?"

"Well, I am not sure. This family would be delightful. Meg likes European life. Their place at Campi is wonderful."

"The Italians seem to expect a

dot," sighed Miss Sterett, leaving her easel and coming to sit on the stool close to Mrs. Taintor's feet. "My eyes are all used up. I can do no more painting to-day."

"It will do you good to rest, dear," said Mrs. Taintor, affectionately leaning her hand on the artist's shoulder. "But, of course, a girl like Meg," she went on, "can make a conquest even here, as in this case."

"I suppose it is rare. One would have to be so sure the parents, too, meant honorably and seriously."

"Oh, of course the Marchese has called, and all that. A very elegant man—most distinguished. He seemed charmed with Meg."

"Naturally."

Matilda Sterett was not as entirely enthusiastic and convinced as Mrs. Taintor expected, and she felt annoyed at her.

It is hard to drag up four flights of stairs and not have one's pet vanities coddled when one arrives.

"I wonder," she thought, "if Matilda heard of my luncheon party, and is provoked at me because she was left out."

But Miss Sterett had not heard of the luncheon. Our consciences invent many mishaps.

"He has a wonderful face," said Matilda. "I have often wished I might paint it. But I am not very good at likeness. He surely is no rascal in disguise."

"Oh, no. And such a beauty! So tall and well built! But he is lazy, like all of them. Athletics are almost unknown here. He deplores the fact himself, but lacks the energy to start out-of-door sports. Meg chaffs him about his indolence. But these patri-cians have centuries of sybaritic living in their veins."

"Italy is beautiful," said Miss Sterett, "but it is a beautiful corpse; and Florence is the refuge of the defeated. I allude, of course, to the colonists and strangers."

"I should hate to think so," said Mrs. Taintor; "one wouldn't care to join that pale army."

"I fear that is the danger of long

residence here," said Miss Sterett, laughing; "one loses sight of one's own discomfiture. One gets besotted, sunk in this lotus-eating calm that gets into the veins and stifles courage and ambition."

"What is one to do!" exclaimed Mrs. Taintor, with alarmed eyes. "One must choose, I suppose, between the places that are growing, where the rush and effort and struggle are in progress—I never scorn what is developing—and accept the battle and its exhaustion, or come to such places as this, which are burnt out, and just drug one's senses into belief that it is enough."

"One needs money for New York and London," said Miss Sterett, who was practical. "And a great many other things, my dear."

"Dear me, how crushing!" said Mrs. Taintor. "Then you think that if the very best offered here it wouldn't be worth taking?"

"What we are ourselves must count for something," replied Miss Sterett. "Your lovely Meg could never be insignificant."

This was a slight sop. But Mrs. Taintor felt unusually depressed when she rose to take leave. She had found Miss Sterett in one of those moods in which she aggravatingly refused to be dazzled. We all need, at times, to daze others by our false splendors; real ones are so evident that they require no heralding.

After her friend's departure Matilda Sterett sat for some time near her window in darkness; sat until the stars came out and shone faintly on dome and *campanile*, on the sleepy, brown Arno and the low, dusky thoroughfare. Life had brought her little joy, yet her spirit was not rebellious. She made few demands on Fate. She had said "defeated," and she was willing to abide by the inevitable. There is rest in the acceptance of humiliation. "I could not have climbed," she said to herself; "I have no breath."

She rose and went to a cupboard and got out the things for her supper. She had given the woman who usu-

ally prepared it a holiday. This maid-of-all-work wanted to go to San Gervasio to see her little girl, who was there with an aunt, getting over a fever. Matilda would have to content herself to-night with fresh milk and bread and fruit. Loneliness and poverty are doubtless terrible, but where ambition is dormant, and credit and debit are made to harmonize, they have freedom. The social tragedy hardly touched her. She had done with it. Content to believe that nothing living can be wholly a failure, her self-respect kept her sweet. And then, what we don't want ourselves looks trivial. The incessant renunciations of limited means had made her charitable rather than envious. Her nature was large, if her purse was light.

The cool night laid its rest upon her. Other women in purpled petticoats and rich laces and rare gems were getting ready for conquest, rivalry, the world. She sought her small, white bed, blew out her candle and was at peace.

"Poor, dear Dolly," she thought, "longs for money—which the philosophers tell us isn't worth while. Its only use, in fact, is that it helps us to *be*. She was not created for heroism. She was created for soft complaints and kisses, to be caressed and guarded. No amount of money could have made me anything but an ugly brown moth. So it would have been wasted. Such creatures as Meg and Dolly need a daily life idealized. Meg is a queen, while her little mother needs ease to develop her better nature. Sometimes now she wants to bite and scratch. I dare say if I had had her burdens I should be all bite and scratch."

Then she thought of her two men friends—of what she could do to make their lives more endurable. One was a sad, gray gentleman, with resigned eyes, whose existence was heavy and desolate. The son of a great painter, he had inherited only mechanical aptitudes. He toiled without appreciation or recompense. He was another of "the defeated."

The other was a mere lad, who had left his Western American town and, full of courage, had come to Italy to study architecture. But the integrity of desire does not pay, even for *polenta*. And he was not only starving, but embittered at finding himself debarred from all the pleasures of his age, from the companionship for which he sighed. He had no vicious predilections. His father had been mayor of their city, and there he had danced with the best. Why was he snubbed and trampled on in Europe? Was it because he was poor? Hate had sprung up in the poor boy's heart—hate for successful people, which found vent in discourtesies to them. He looked on the Taintor ladies as spoiled beauties who must be chastened. And he had once, in Miss Sterett's *atelier*, remained on a chair with his hat on in their presence—a rudeness of which he was himself sheepishly ashamed, and for which even the gentle Matilda severely admonished him. "What can I say to show him that his feeling springs from envy, without breaking his boy's heart?" thought the excellent little old maid, who often shared her milk and fruit with the hungry lad.

"Why were you so rude to my friends?" she had said to him.

"I hate them!"

"Why should you hate such lovely women?"

"They are too fashionable for me."

"They say 'smart,' here," said Miss Sterett, laughing. "You speak of fashion as if it were a moral quality, like temper, or egotism, or cowardice, not a mere accident of prestige."

"It is egotism and cowardice," he replied, sullenly. "Snobs are cowards!"

"Dear, dear!" said Miss Sterett.

Gino, alone in the garden under the trees, whose humid verdure cast straight dark lines across the gravel path, flecking the statues with shadow, was as motionless as if asleep. The aristocratic Italian's capacity for doing nothing reaches sublimity. Gino

could sit for hours looking at his feet, as immovable as the Apollo of the garden walk. Nature, however, has its revenges. Emotions use and kill as surely as arduous labor, if less swiftly, and nervous energy can be consumed in moods of apparent contemplation.

Gino was sure that his father thought Meg *légère*. If she were so with him, might there be . . . others? Others permitted to press her white fingers? He decided to lay a trap for her. He was soon to have opportunity. His jealousy, furious, sensual, left him no rest.

V

By tacit coquetry, mother and daughter sometimes changed places in the matter of toilette. Safe in the arrogance of her eighteen years, Meg had put on, one evening, a black, trailing gown, closely fitting her slight figure. Slashed at the throat, it exposed her long neck, a trifle thin, but elegant in its bird-like, unexpected movements, thrown back at times, as if the young girl listened for the lagging footsteps of her fate. She had crowned her hair with a wreath of gardenia flowers. Their dark leaves decked her like the laurels of a Muse. A bunch of the same pure blossoms was caught at her belt. Very Muse-like she looked, with her great, starry eyes and her serious, sensitive lips.

Mrs. Taintor, on the contrary, was dressed like a girl, in a faint pink, fluffy stuff, which added brilliancy to her complexion and through whose transparency shone her white arms and rounded bosom.

"Darling," said Meg, "you are too exquisite! You look just like pink-and-white ice cream. I shall certainly eat you up!"

Lady Igraine had come. She lived on the ground floor in the next palazzo. Her husband had an obstinate cough, and had been sent to Florence for the Spring. Lady Igraine did not like Florence. She was extremely bored.

She was very "smart," and, therefore, *persona grata* wherever she went, no matter what trouble she gave or heart-burnings she awoke.

Mrs. Taintor cultivated her assiduously. This was in case Meg should ever get a London season—a possibility which lay in that amiable future in which relatives leave one legacies and incompetent providers go to paradise. Lady Igraine, who, as we have said, was bored, lent herself good-naturedly to this court. She always dragged after her an elderly bull terrier. He was a blear-eyed creature, revoltingly greedy and regrettably malodorous. Yet she lavished endless caresses on him with her strong, fine hands and gave him the best *tartines* and the daintiest pasties from Mrs. Taintor's tea table.

She had come in to spend the evening, in a gray costume and a large black hat. She didn't think Florence worth changing one's frock for; and besides, she had been airing her pet, after dinner, in the Viale dei Colli. "He is a naughty, naughty Puffie," she was saying to Mrs. Taintor. "He bit Donna Clara's leg yesterday, and it's quite bumpy. You can't fancy! such a fuss! Grocco had to let out some blood."

Mrs. Taintor unconsciously tucked her own plump limbs more carefully under her chair.

"Why will she wear that old red shawl?" the visitor continued. "The darling is near-sighted, and mistook it for meat."

"How very unpleasant for Donna Clara!" murmured Dolly.

"Yes, Puffie, you are very naughty!" Lady Igraine shook her finger at the culprit, who was slowly masticating a ham sandwich.

"Last week, when I went to see the old Princess d'Armath, while we were chatting he ate all the heads off her turtledoves. She got quite hot and hysteric, poor dear!"

Mrs. Taintor glanced down at the panting animal, that seemed to her fancy to have blood in his eye and to be still licking his chops from his sanguinary meal.

"The Princess must have regretted her doves," she said, smiling, although a violent desire to kick Lady Igraine invaded her. "She adored them."

"It was such a nuisance!" said Lady Igraine, impersonally. "Puffie got so cross I could hardly pull him away. He got their feathers down his throat, and they gave him the worst sort of indigestion. I had to purge him. Such a pothor!"

"Nice dog! good Puffie!" murmured Dolly, putting out a hand.

Thus apostrophized, Puffie growled, snarled and showed his teeth.

"Isn't he—er—tufted? His color is rare. Tum-Tum bought him for me at Nice for a bet. He didn't pay much—he never does. I think he was a stolen dog. The man wasn't awfully stiff on the price."

Mrs. Taintor was reflecting that there was no sort of doubt that Meg would get into the right set if Lady Igraine was only willing to undertake it; and she tried to pet the nose of this royal gift. But Puffie snapped at her fingers, and so terrified her that she rapidly retreated, reflecting that if Puffie should bite Meg, and they all went mad, plots to propitiate royalty would be of small avail.

"Look out for that awful dog!" she whispered, as she passed her daughter, moving forward to receive some new arrivals.

These were Harry Ford and his young wife—a bride, not "from Italy, with smells of oleanders in her hair," but from Cincinnati, a friend of Meg's childhood. The pair were on a prolonged honeymoon trip.

Dolly led them through the salon and presented them to Lady Igraine.

Mrs. Ford murmured a greeting. Lady Igraine stared and said nothing.

There was a pause. Mrs. Ford sat down.

"Isn't Florence a beastly hole!" said Lady Igraine.

"I've only just got here," said Mrs. Ford, "and so far I find it lots of fun."

Lady Igraine again stared, speechless.

"Lady Igraine thinks Florence a 'beastly hole," said Mrs. Ford, laughing, to her husband.

He was a large, blond young gentleman, with a clean-shaven, rosy face and enormous hands.

"It ain't exactly a No. 1 place," said Mr. Ford, "rather one-horse, it strikes me; but Freddie wanted to see the sights, and here we are. We've found friends, and I guess we'll stick it out a week or ten days. I'm satisfied, if she is."

"Do you stay here long?" asked Mrs. Ford.

"I'm here for Igraine's cough," said Lady Igraine; "his stomach, too, is horrid. He can't eat. He went to the States, but he came back quite used-up. His doctor's a donkey. All doctors are donkeys. We've got to stick here till June."

Gino di Formosa now entered the room. In a moment he was leaning over Meg's chair. The girl felt herself once more drawn into that atmosphere of delicious homage which made the very air palpitate with pleasure.

She was entirely conscious that mentally he said nothing to her. Intellectually his superior, his materialism shocked her. She rocked herself in the belief that she could not really love a fellow who was stupid. She had often said to her mother that he was not intelligent. Of late, however, she had said it less frequently. She had ceased to discuss him, letting herself drift toward that fascination which she was beginning to find somewhat overwhelming. She usually assumed toward him maternal airs of playful command, which enchanted him and before which he bowed in a sort of mock meekness.

To-night she was a little reckless. "You can say to me what you like. Papa has gone to Bologna, and for once mamma is not listening. You can tell me my dress becomes me, that my favorite flower suits my type, and a lot more compliments. That is the only conversation of which you are capable. And when my parents are near me you only gaze at me, and don't talk."

"Because you make a fool of me," said Gino.

"Oh, my dear boy, are you so easily made a fool of? Let us speak in Italian, and then it is I that shall play the fool. But why are you so suspicious? I never laugh at you any more."

"I detest Italian!"

"How unpatriotic!"

"What have you done to-day?"

"I have been at the Uffizi. I have been at the Santa Annunziata. I have read the hieroglyphics of your dead nation, still, from her grave, in art the tutoress of the present world."

"You frighten me!"

"I am quoting Ruskin, and you never found it out!"

"I don't know anything about him."

"I thought as much."

"I am very ignorant."

"I know it."

"What else did you do?"

"I translated and murdered a verse in de Lisle's 'Dies Iræ.'"

"Tell it to me."

"And thou, divinest Death, which calms
and which effaces,
Enfold thy weary child upon thy
starry breast.
Exempt from time and tide, from num-
bers and from spaces,
Restore the lost repose that Life has
dispossessed."

"That is very beautiful, but very melancholy," said Gino.

"My papa is away," said Meg, with a note of defiance in her voice. "He has gone to see a friend who is ill at Bologna. Oh, he is so good! I wilt, if far from him. I grow sad." Then she flushed furiously and tossed back her head to conceal her embarrassment.

Gino was delicate, if not literary; and the girl's passionate loyalty to her father always thrilled him with admiration. It was this response to the slightest demand on his emotions which captivated Meg. "There are cleverer men who do not understand," she thought. "It is so lovable in him, because I know how awful he thinks it." Tears from her plucky heart rose to her beautiful eyes. She

brushed them away and sprang to her feet.

"Let us go and join the others. I want to introduce you to Lady Igraine."

"Those *réclame* women do not please me," said the young man. "But you—you make me entirely to lose my head."

He wanted to fall at Meg's feet, for he had seen the mists in her eyes. The Latins see everything. He detained her with his jealous questionings.

"Before we go, tell me the more important things you have done."

Meg laughed heartily. "What is more important, pray, than to absorb artistic impressions?"

"What you do, who you see yourself."

"Oh, I'll tell you by-and-by."

"Have you met Dolcini again?"

"Why?"

"He is as unworthy of your thought as a tumbler at a circus would be. Do not trust him!" murmured Gino, angrily.

"Jealous again!" thought Meg, and was secretly enraptured. "Come," she teased, "let us not quarrel over circus clowns. Let us go to Lady Igraine." And she crossed the room.

"I tell you I detest those professional beauties," said Gino, following her. Did Lady Igraine hear him? A slight smile curled her haughty, short upper lip.

"He is dead in love with her," Mrs. Ford had said.

"She won't get him, you know," said Lady Igraine.

"Meg Taintor doesn't look like a woman who need angle, who'd go begging," said Mr. Ford, gallantly.

"She hasn't got a copper," said Lady Igraine. "It's American dollars the foreigners want."

"Let her come back to America," said Ford. "We don't ask pay there to marry our girls."

"Your women don't seem to want to go back," said Lady Igraine.

"Girls never know when they're well off," said Ford.

"Surely such a beauty as Meg can make a conquest anywhere," said Mrs. Ford, ingenuously.

"That's rot, you know!" said Lady Igraine. "I could manage that girl. She's cheery, and looks rather smart sometimes. She's better than most of the Americans. They're such Arabs! But what's the use of crying out she hasn't anything? The mother's an ass. One can always say there are expectations, you know."

Mrs. Ford was too amazed at this mixture of kindness and insolence to reply. Mr. Ford stuck his hands into his pockets and whistled.

Meg presented her Prince Charming. Lady Igraine gave her usual unabashed and direct glance, meeting this fresh acquaintance without comment.

Gino made a deep obeisance; then stood up before her in the majesty of his grave height.

"Do they sell dead flies here in the shops?" asked Lady Igraine, raising her lorgnon.

Gino remained perfectly imperturbable through Mrs. Ford's titter and Mr. Ford's guffaw.

"I have few opportunities to go to the shops," he said, politely. "I will ask my father's valet. He is an old Florentine, and no doubt knows all that can be purchased."

"I wish you would," said Lady Igraine.

"They might be discovered in the apothecary's ointment," laughed Meg; "or at least, so the Bible suggests. But what in the world——?"

"I don't want stinking ones," said Lady Igraine. "I feed my monkey on them. She eats three dozen a day. Her appetite is quite dreadful! It's inconvenient in traveling, don't you see?" Her inflection of this inquiry was so musical that it charmed ear and sense.

"I will ask the valet," said Gino, still unsmiling, rigid and civil.

"Those eyelashes are horrid form!" said Lady Igraine in her natural voice to Mr. Ford, as if entirely unaware that the Italian understood and had replied in English—much as we speak

of foreign servants in their presence. "He'd have to cut them off if he came to England. He'd get mobbed."

Meg came to the rescue.

"Dear Freda," she said, "won't you be an angel? Won't you dance for us just the least little bit? There are so few here! You cannot imagine," she said to Lady Igraine, "what Freda's dancing is like."

Two or three other gentlemen had come. Mrs. Taintor was chatting with them on the terrace. Meg clapped her hands.

"Mamma, mamma, bring them all in! We are going to make Freda dance. Such a nymph!"

Lady Igraine said she should be greatly entertained.

Mrs. Ford looked at her husband. She hesitated. He gave a nod of assent. In a moment she had picked up the hem of her yellow draperies and moved like a sunset cloud to the middle of the carpet. There she paused, rested a wrist lightly on her left hip, surveyed the company, made a sweeping curtsy, and began.

"You've no idea! She's wonderful!" said Meg, "and she's never had a lesson. It is a gift of imagination. She only saw la Fuller once."

Mrs. Ford made a few wavering steps from side to side, then raising her diaphanous garments, whirled into space.

She darted, spun and twisted like some sprite of the wold—now here, now there, swift, intangible, a creature of air and dew, faster and faster whirling with the beat as of wings.

She was *petite* and pale, with a frail face and a form like that of a lithe boy. There was not an ounce of superfluous flesh on her. When she grew heedless and tossed up her skirt, and her black hose shone above her slender knees as she wildly threw herself hither and thither in the frenzy of her excitement, there was not a suggestion of impropriety.

"Brava! brava!" cried Gino, clapping his hands, all the artist in him awake, while Lady Igraine, who was full of animal spirit, was quite de-

lighted, crying out: "Capital! capital! Go on! go on!"

Never envious, she always generously granted full dues to the perfections of other women.

"I must have her at Igraine for the shooting," she said to Gino. "The men will be so amused! We expect a lot of people. It's nice up there. The castle gardens look on the sea."

"Brava! brava!" cried Gino, hardly listening to her, intent on the gyrations of this creature who seemed made all of wind and smoke, and scarcely human, as she sank to the floor like a brooding butterfly.

Her thin, nervous hands were of ice, her nostrils dilated, her heart was hot within her. She knew this was her moment of power, and being a woman, she enjoyed its triumph. Meg might be distinguished, Mrs. Taintor rosy, Lady Igraine *crâne*; they couldn't approach her now. For a moment she had lived alone.

Her husband called her. She rose amid shouts of praise and came to him quietly, with no flutter to betray her heightened pulses—paler than before, her dry hair blown like brown dust about her cheeks.

"I have hurt my foot, Harry," she said, and kicked off her slipper. He picked up the morsel on the rebound and held it affectionately in his great, pink palm.

He stooped and whispered in her ear.

"He is ashamed," thought Gino, "*il marito*, and perhaps jealous."

"I am telling my wife," said Ford, with a comfortable smile, "that she mustn't dance any more to-night. The poor girl's hardly over her sea voyage, and if she overdoes she gets nervous prostration. Her nerves are a bundle of fiddlestrings."

"I see," said Gino, with a grin.

Meg felt a little left out in the cold, a trifle vexed at her adorer's admiration of another's achievement. There shot through her a moment's childish pique foreign to her nature.

"You ought to see my *pas seul*," she said to him; "I do it only for papa and mamma. I can dance, too."

Gino looked at her narrowly, and then begged her, with almost affected insistence, to prove her talent.

"We are among friends here; come, mademoiselle, do us the favor—dance for us!"

His words were overheard, and others came, urging Meg to exhibit her graces. Gino's insistent importunity at last displeased her.

"Have done!" she said, a little sharply; "I will not."

"The most charming thing," said Mrs. Taintor, coming up, "is that Frederica's dancing, no matter what capers she cuts, is never improper."

"It is indeed remarkable," whispered an old Italian count. "That young woman's dancing is but the madcap antic of a frolicsome child."

Meg was cross to Gino, and they parted coldly.

In her bed she wondered why he had so insisted on her dancing—she, to whom such an exhibition would have been impossible. She had beaten her brain for his motive, and decided to ask him.

On the following day she did so.

Left alone with him on the balcony by a moment's weariness of Mrs. Taintor's vigilance, she said:

"Why did you want me to dance before all those people?"

"If you had danced," said Gino, hotly, "I would have *killed* you."

There was a soft radiance on the girl's upraised forehead.

"Then . . . why . . . ?"

"I was testing your character."

An abyss seemed suddenly to yearn under Meg's feet. The radiance fell. His flatteries came to her with a warning of unknown depths, unexplored, and possibly dangerous. He was more, then, than a sweet, lovesick boy, to chide and to ridicule! He was a man, laying nets full of subtle plotting.

She moved from his side uneasily. But in that moment she knew that she loved him.

VI

EVERYBODY had left. Florence at sunset looked like a flame in its bowl

of hills. The streets were empty and silent at noon, except for the few mortals who hugged the walls as they glided swiftly to toil or play. The men played the waterspouts in the Cascine across the Viale del Re, filling the air with the smell of the fine, hot dust. The *fieno* had long been cut, and the low meadows lay between the shining roads like emeralds in burnished settings. The Arno was almost dry. Men drove carts across it, wading and shouting in the shallows. Where the dam was, naked children clambered down to bathe their limbs in the cool rush of waters.

The Taintors still lingered. Travel is expensive, and when people have left town they don't know you are there. You are supposed to be at Montecatini or Vallombrosa, or in the gayer Swiss and Austrian watering-places.

Taintor had the excuse of the statue to which he was giving last touches—his *capo lavoro*, and his last. It was destined for a grave. It was a tribute of affection. Fithian Haldeane, his best friend, had long been dead. But in the sad little Protestant cemetery this fair statue would soon rise, and underneath, the medallion that mirrored the dead man's beauty. They had the same virtues and the same faults, Fithian and Taintor, and had been devoted friends. What was the statue? Pity? Silence? Hope? Bob would not name her. "Let her tell her own tale," he said.

The ladies Taintor, however, were getting ready in their turn to start for a brief *villeggiatura*. The artist himself, interested in his labor, had been better of late. There had been a respite. In the evenings, when he came home, his talk had some of its old brilliance, its wit and its fascination. He had also earned five hundred *lire* writing some articles, which Meg had translated, on matters of art, for an Italian review. The sum was assuredly not imposing, but his self-respect had found its vent in buying little presents for his women: for Dolly, a Sant' Antonio in silvered metal, in his shrine—the saint who

brings forever back to us what we have lost; for Meg a bit of rare embroidery, picked up in a curiosity shop of the Bardi, a richly worked red heart—at its centre two white roses pierced by a golden dagger—the bleeding heart of Mary. Of course, the women would have much preferred something to wear. What woman wouldn't, who needs gloves and stockings, shoes and fans, and has cramped means with which to supply these necessities? Tactfully, however, and gratefully, they accepted these Catholic emblems and talismans. Dolly, in fact, went to her room and wept tears of remorse—remorse that she had ever dreamed of liberty. He had looked so pleased when he made his offering, with his mournful lips and sunken eyes. Dolly had once loved her husband *d'amour*, and she still loved him with the far stronger passion of pity. "I am a fiend," she said to herself. "Poor, poor Bob! Oh, my poor husband!" And she put the Sant' Antonio near her bed and baptized him with falling tears.

Gino was supposed to be at San Michele. But he had secretly come back, and was picnicking alone in the deserted rooms of the palazzo, to be near *her* again.

"Meg doesn't care for him in the least," Mrs. Taintor continued to say to Miss Sterett, who never left Florence, adding, in her blind, maternal pride, "but he is quite mad about her. We really can't keep him away."

Meg had grown strangely thinner, with wan, wide eyes and a look as of one consumed.

"We must hurry her out of town now," said Dolly; "we have stopped too long. The heat wastes the dear pet."

But to all her mother's questions Meg always answered, "I feel perfectly well, darling."

She was devoured night and day with the wish to see him alone—alone, just once. Her mother's espionage, so futile, yet incessant, racked her nerves. They might conscientiously chain her speech; they could not imprison her spirit. Sometimes she

spoke irritably to her parents, fevered by her mother's chatter, her idle comments on men and things.

"If he had only given you a gown, instead of that heart!" Dolly would say, having dried her tears and returned to common life.

"Don't tell him so!" Meg implored. "It would break his heart."

"Is Formosa coming to see you to-night?"

"How can I tell?"

"Meg, don't deceive me. You know what Italians are. Oh, dear me, I wish he had money!"

"What good would it do me?" Meg squirmed.

"You would be Marchesa. Gino is a dear! I am in love with him myself."

Meg got up and looked out of the window. She tapped her fingers restlessly on its sculptured coping.

"I am stifling!" she said.

"An American would *do* something. He wouldn't just lie down. Our men have more spirit. They don't dawdle like that. Well, it's fortunate you don't care. I sometimes wonder what you are made of, how you can resist."

"Resist what?"

"Don't you think he sincerely wants to marry you?"

"Oh, mamma, you will drive me frantic!" And the girl flew off to hide in her own room.

One night she escaped. She did the most awful thing. She sent Gino a note. She made a tryst with him. She knew her father would be going out, and she decoyed her mother to an evening call on Miss Sterett, pleading a violent headache at the last moment, and letting her start alone.

Her pulses beating wildly, her cheeks crimson, she stole down the broad stone stairs, pushed open the door that led into the old garden, and stepped out under the stars.

The porter was dozing on his straw chair, in his niche that looked on the street. There was only one maid in the Marchese's apartments, and she was sewing by her lamp in an upper

room, tightly closed in Italian fashion from the night's dampness.

The young Marchese was standing near the Apollo, pale as the statue itself, with his clear-cut profile, his short, straight hair, his picturesque elegance.

"Angel!" he whispered.

He raised her fingers to his lips, kissed and released them.

"Angel!"

"Gino, I had to come! I must speak with you. Dear boy, this is good-bye."

"Why?"

"Why? Of what do you dream? You know it couldn't go on . . . so." How his irresolution tortured her!

"I have always hoped," he said, vaguely.

"There is no hope." She shook her head. "You have been very silly to pay court to a penniless girl."

He remained silent. He thought so, too.

"I shall speak to my father."

"What will you say to him?" She spoke almost sharply. There is a limit beyond which persons of order and reason cannot be played with.

"I shall ask him to serve me the income of mamma's fortune. That is not much, but if—"

"If what?" asked Meg.

He was very deliberate. Italians always have plenty of time. It maddened her.

"Speak quickly, I cannot stay."

"If there was some method. Sometimes, instead of giving jewels, relatives give—"

"You mean my relatives? Give me money? Be direct, please. I cannot stop here."

And this was their first rendezvous! Her heart was breaking.

"The relatives of both—"

"Stop!" said Meg, "I have no such relatives. None. I have no expectations. Papa—you know—you have seen . . ." She was plucky, but she choked.

"Oh, my angel, my beloved!" said Gino, leaning toward her. "Look up at me with those languid eyes!

Your lips are like coral, *carissima mia*. Love me a little. I worship you!"

Then Meg threw everything to the winds.

"An American would *do* something," she said. "If he wanted his girl he would take her hand."

"I cannot yet sell tape behind a counter, or stand all day at a desk in the bank, like Pucci," said Gino, laughing.

She laughed, too. She looked at those perfect hands, those splendid lashes and dewy lips. "It would indeed be a desecrating process," she thought, "to put the Belvedere to selling soap or cutting coupons. It would be bad art." Her laugh was a trifle bitter.

"Very well," she said, decidedly.

"It is as I said, then—good-bye."

"You dismiss me so? You can be so cruel?"

"Oh, what do you want of me?" the girl cried, exasperated. "Why torture each other further? You cannot understand; you never will. All our thoughts, our traditions, are different."

"If my mother had lived she would have helped us. But she died when I was a *povero bambinetto* of five." He spoke with such soul-stirring simplicity, she felt as if he needed protection, as if she were much older. "Papa wants me to marry—you know whom. The girl and her parents are in our hands. But, my dearest, it is you—or no one. I shall never yield." His sincerity seemed so convincing! He felt himself to be very noble. "Say, at least, that you could be happy near me!" He gazed at her reproachfully.

The poor child swayed to him a moment. "Oh, my love!" she cried.

Their lips met.

The Marchese di Formosa had not found his cure satisfactory. He had a violent indigestion, and a quarrel with the local doctor. He decided to come back to town to consult his family physician.

It so happened that it was on this

particular evening he returned to his Florentine palazzo.

He threw two *lire* to the cabman and ordered the flustered porter to carry up his valise.

He found the apartment quite dark, but the entrance door ajar. "How's this?" he asked, angrily.

The sleepy *portiere* dropped the luggage and scratched his ear. "The Signore Gino has come, too," he said. The Marchese gloomed.

"What does this mean? Where is Beppo?" Beppo was Gino's servant—a shiftless youth imported from the fiefs of Campi.

"Out, Signore Marchese."

"And my son?"

"He must be on the terrace, or in the garden, Signore Marchese, or the door would not be so left."

The Marchese, in an extremely unpromising humor, ordered him out and went in.

The rooms looked weird and strange to him in the faint light. He groped his way, and struck a match.

It is disagreeable to return where one is master and not be properly received.

He crossed the stately drawing-rooms and went to his own apartments. They were all done up in curl-papers—pictures and chairs and candelabra shrouded in white.

The atmosphere was oppressive, like that of a vault long closed. He pushed open the blind.

"Ah, that's better," he said, as a gust swept the restless trees and struck his moist brow and hair.

"So, Monsieur Gino, while you write me letters posted at San Michele, assuring me your court to la della Torre is progressing favorably, you are hiding in town with your other love affairs! We'll see about this, you young scamp!" He would have viewed such deception as clever and astute if practiced on another. It is astonishing how unforgivable the lies become which are leveled at us.

The Marchese leaned out. He became at once convinced that he was not alone, that there were others near. He stepped quickly back into the

shadow, still, however, peering through the leaves at the gravel path beneath.

He first recognized his son's long legs in their white duck trousers. Then he saw Meg's flitting figure.

Gino was prudent. The kiss had been brief. He would not for a sip jeopardize a deeper draught.

"It is not safe here, my dearest," he whispered. He did, in fact, desire to protect her, and felt that on the whole his attitude toward her was loyal.

The girl was too intoxicated with his caress to analyze him. What did anything matter any more?—money, marriage, anything, if they but loved each other! In her exaltation, she ceased to judge him.

"Good-night, Gino, dear Gino!" she said, and almost ran from him through the shrubberies into the house.

"I can lead him to any height," she thought.

Meg was too young to have learned that it is only the strong who can be influenced. Yet these feeble natures, who bear reproach with a patience that is but weakness—reproach at which the forceful would rebel to conquer—are the best loved always.

"So," said the Marchese to himself, "it is the American! It is evident she is not a pure girl. Is she Gino's mistress? That is the question. What sort of a *mauvais lieu* do her parents think I am keeping in my house? Are they her dupes or her accomplices? Probably the latter. The case looks grave enough. If Gino has seduced her under promise of marriage, how shall a di Formosa break his word of honor? They've of course tried to force him, and he's caught—*ecco!*"

It was all part of his ill-luck. He had lately discovered that his Austrian widow's estates were heavily mortgaged, and he had serious doubts of his actress's fidelity.

"The strumpet!" he murmured to himself; "after all my generosity—I who educated her and made her career!"

To fall morally in another's estima-

tion was, according to the Marchese's tenets, to emancipate that other from all obligation. He knew her well. There would be appeals to his higher nature, tears and cries, with protestations of constancy. But fragile women need hope no grace from the man to whose soul they appeal. They are never taken seriously. They have but one weapon, and when they lay it down they are lost.

His marriage had not been happy. His wife had died, after ten years passed together without one trait of character or one sentiment in common, and without one acquired sympathy—ten years of suffering. However, he had mourned her. He had known remorse. He had been left with his little ones. He was fond of his children, with the animal yearning over their young which Italian men share with their women—an affection made up of foolish indulgence and selfish interference. Nevertheless, according to his lights he had done his duty by them. Yet he was disappointed. In spite of some vices, the Marchese was not a fiend. He was even a gentleman. He had married his daughter to an *homme sérieux*, but her too rapidly increasing family caused him anxiety. "She was so pretty and joyous," he said to himself, "and she looks old already! Bernardo is a virtuous man, but, like all such, hard." His Russian daughter-in-law he detested cordially. Now there remained but Gino to make an idiot of himself. "The della Torre have a half-promise from me," he thought, dejectedly, "and if they hear this there'll be a fine mess. I can see already her blond nose and her mother's middle-aged smile when they hear the truth. Whew! I went too fast. Gino is obstinate, like his poor mother—God rest her soul!" He felt some pusillanimity at what he was undertaking—that dread of pain, that fear of consequences which heralds the advance of years. A heart that has bled and trembled grows easily timorous and cold. It shrinks from risks at which youth laughs. The fussiness of age and its lassitude

were already upon him, although he was still robust in appearance and very handsome. Once an exquisite of the *guardia nobile*, he was still admired by women and envied by men for his fine stature and bearing.

"The father a drunkard and the mother imprudent," he went on, preparing for his bed; "what a family! The Corsini and Donna Clara receive them. What is our society coming to? Jews are getting in everywhere, and our sons want to marry them. Now I think of it, that girl looks Jewish. I've kept Gino too much at home. Experience is such a cruel schoolmaster I tried to shield my children from its lessons—to teach them life at less cost; and now, what have I gained? Donna Clara has fallen from the woman discussed to the woman who discusses. She feels it. She must needs fill her salon with foreigners and adventurers to make it piquant. It was she, I'll wager, who brought this affair about. These old women must revenge themselves on nature when it deprives them of the power of conquest, by meddling in other people's concerns."

He had reached the age when we get tired of our friends and think they have deteriorated.

His mind was full of activity as to how he should get his boy out of this scrape. If Gino could spread nets, it was an inherited talent. A great statesman had once guessed this aptitude in the father, and had offered him a diplomatic mission of importance. The Marchese had sacrificed his ambitions to his children. He thought them too young to travel. He would not abandon them. His powers had rusted, but on occasion he could still use them. Like Michelangelo, commanded by Pietro de' Medici to carve a statue of snow, his material had been inadequate to achievements of genius. Here was a *mauvais pas* in which perhaps stouter stuff would have to be employed. He girded himself up to his task. "It needs a Cavour," he thought.

He began by allowing Gino to suppose that he had seen—everything.

And Gino fell into the snare. He had, in fact, seen nothing but Meg's swift retreat through the shrubbery.

"I think Beppo had his eye on the door, too," he said, sternly. This was a lie, but the lad must learn his lesson.

Gino flushed shamefacedly.

"Mademoiselle Taintor is an angel!" he said.

"An angel who makes trysts with young gentlemen at night," thought the Marchese. But being a man of tact, he only waved his hand impatiently. "Of course, of course."

"We met accidentally," said Gino. "I lost my head. I love her."

"And la della Torre?"

"She may go to *il diavolo*!"

"Slowly, slowly. This is a serious piece of business, and I'll thank you not to be flippant."

He then talked long to his son in low tones, not unkindly. He pointed out to him the duties honor imposed—the honor of a great and unsullied name. He exposed to him their terrible pecuniary embarrassments, which only a rich marriage on his part could avert. "It is no joke," he said, "for a man to compromise a young girl. It may bear heavy penalty."

Gino crawled to bed profoundly miserable. Even the exhilarating reflection that two beautiful women wanted him failed to cheer. He was very young.

Earlier the next morning than was his wont the Marchese had himself driven to Donna Clara's. This intrepid lady was in town for a week, between a visit to the Exposition at Venice and a flight to Apennine mountain tops. He found her in her garden. Their conversation was brief, but to the point. Like Napoleon, he was not ashamed to ask questions whose answer he ought to have known—a proof of wit.

He told her all—even the kiss that he had not seen. He made it two or three. Donna Clara, although much vexed, carried herself with a high hand. She was loud in Meg's defense, and very patriotic.

"Mere child's thoughtlessness," she said, shaking her head. "Meg is beautiful, clever, well-educated and a snowdrop. Jews? Heavens! Descended from Puritan warriors; the very embodiment of respectability; solid and admirable; the father a man of the highest talent, the mother a lady." Gino, she thought, had behaved badly. He had been after the girl all Winter. Everybody had seen his devotion. But, of course, the Marchese would better know at once there was no money, not a *soldo*.

The Marchese bowed himself out. He was disappointed. It was going to be far more difficult than he had imagined. "The young rogue," he murmured, "is in deeper waters than I fancied. If it is the custom for Yankee virgins to conduct themselves in such loose fashion, where is a man's defense?"

Modern ideas were too much for him. It was evident that Donna Clara's sympathies were entirely with her compatriots. She had bidden him adieu with an actual air of triumph.

The sun was very hot. The morning was sultry. Under the awning of the cab he had hailed he was smothering. He was so tall that it scratched the top of his hat. He had to bob his head about. This trifle added to his nervous irritability. He took off his hat and wiped his forehead with his fine scented handkerchief. He was extremely cross. "Clever, too, the minx!" he thought. He had the terror of a clever woman common to men. In this their judgment is at fault. It is the fools of whom one must be afraid. Their genius is invincible. They knock us down in moments when we are weaponless. Against their surprises we can never guard. There is a certain breadth and largeness in the attack of the clever. They are proud of their skill. But the fool's thrust is in the dark—irresponsible, unreasoning. In the general confusion it may, in fact, hit the wrong person. But it does its work.

While he drove back across the

burning city a sudden illumination made all clear—an idea worthy of the man whose powers he had invoked. Cavour could not have entertained a better one.

"I will manage everything, if you will leave it to me," he said to Gino, over their breakfast, of which they partook on their balcony. "If you interfere I shall wash my hands of you, and you can get out of my house with your girl, or without her."

"I think—" said Gino.

"I won't trouble you to think," said his papa, glaring. "I have thought enough for us both. You are giving me sleepless nights."

He helped himself to an olive.

Gino quailed.

"What will you do?" he said, with distressed pupils.

The Marchese smiled.

"All I hear of them is satisfying. I shall ask her for you in marriage."

And he ate another olive.

An atmosphere of uncertainty makes us fear directness. Gino knew his father's nature to be tortuous and subtle. He knew such absolute methods were not his. He feared his father, who in some moods could be pitiless. He felt, with a sudden despair, that the game was lost. But he remained sullenly silent.

That evening the Marchese di Formosa sent a servant to ask if Mr. Taintor would receive him.

Taintor did so in the bare apartment he called his study, which was filled with the mended furniture and unmended bric-à-brac that would not fit to any other room, and it was here he crept sometimes to hide his shame. But to-night he was, as Dolly would have said, "all right," and he appeared uncommonly well. Looking back on the interview, the Marchese admitted this himself.

The visit was short. The Marchese asked Mademoiselle Taintor's hand for his son, told of his son's love for her in pathetic accents, grew quite dramatic, expressed his regret that Gino's lack of a mother had permitted certain faults to grow in him which

only a mother could have corrected—his voice broke here into the huskiness of emotion. He expressed admiration for Meg's beauty and reputed gifts. Then, as an afterthought, as he rose to depart, he said "The question of the *dot* our attorneys would have to arrange. It is, as you know, customary in European countries. I believe *chez vous* there are other arrangements." He was not going to be thought old-fashioned, not *au fait*. "We will not be too exacting—500,000 *lire*, of which we would permit the half to be settled on the lady herself, administered by herself. By Italian law, of course, the husband has control of the wife's *dot*—all is in common—hem." He had the air of a Cæsar bestowing a principality. "Mademoiselle—er—Marguerite, is it not?—is very pretty. My son is infatuated. But pardon me if I say that besides the income I shall serve to Gino, we confer something—something." He smiled benignly, showing his teeth under his fierce gray mustache. "There will be some lands—some—of which our lawyer will speak. Gino's uncle left him fiefs near Campi. There are expectations. Our family is one of the most ancient in Italy. She will have access to the most noble houses here—abroad. She will——"

Taintor cut him short.

"I am aware," he said, "of the honor you do my daughter. But we have other ideas for her."

Dolly, who was listening at the keyhole, tottered. She had been carried away with the Marchese's oratory. She had expected to see the \$100,000 drop from the frescoed ceiling to the mosaic floor. It seemed cruel to her that the suit should be so summarily dismissed.

"You have other ideas?"

"Your son is too young, and we have no reason to believe our daughter is attached to him."

"My God!" murmured the Marchese.

"Besides which, she is without fortune."

"This is most painful," said the

Marchese. "I, too, had other ideas for my son; but his affections——"

Taintor made a grimace. He reached for his cigarette case.

"Will you take one?" he said.

The Marchese took one and lit it in silence.

"May I ask," he said, after a short pause, "why you have fanned his sentiments, if they were without hope?"

"I was not aware that it was anything but calf-love, attacks of which are frequent in early youth. Bless me! our Meg has treated him like a little brother. He has come in and out here always with my knowledge, always under the eyes of her mother."

The Marchese was human. He was completely astonished. This Yankee took his daughter's nocturnal escapades with as much unconcern as the absorption of tea and little cakes at a "five o'clocking." This was the name the Marchese persisted in bestowing on the Anglo-Saxon rite, that he thought disgusting.

"There was . . . the garden," he said.

"Ah, yes, the garden," said Taintor, drily. "I wanted to speak of this. As we desire one for our own private uses, we have decided to leave when the lease expires."

"It would indeed be better . . . to have . . . your own," said the Marchese, rising.

He felt aggrieved and wounded. He had expected an outcry for "reparation." He was dismissed with easy disdain. The first would have been inconvenient. But the second, somehow, had a humiliating sting.

"Good-night," he said, bowing, and moving to the door.

"Good-night," said Taintor, stiffly. And they shook hands.

VII

IN the early Autumn Gino married Nerina della Torre. He celebrated the day before his nuptials by driving openly in public with a notorious idol of the ballet. He allowed coarse jests to be leveled at his intended bride

and her pursuit of him, and was forced to the altar, pale, moody, restive, with death in his heart.

The night before his marriage he wrote a letter to Meg in England.

"All the horrible stories you will hear about me," he wrote, "are true. I have been vile. I have been base. I have sunk low. I do not love my fiancée. I never shall. Fate and my father were too much for me. Only write me one word and say that you pity me. Say you will not marry Nicco Dolcini. He's a bad fellow—worse than I am. I would have been your slave, your dog. Do not refuse me your hand if we ever meet. Do not turn away from me in the street."

And he signed himself, "Your forever adoring Gino."

Meg read this strange missive to its end. She did not answer it. There is a sad satisfaction in keeping one arrow in the quiver. A letter withheld is sometimes this. Over her lost illusion she preferred silence.

"And he looked like a demi-god!" she thought. She reflected sadly that there are men who waste enough nervous energy in renouncement to have conquered worlds.

The Taintors went for the shooting up to the Igraines'. Here they met the Fords. Mrs. Ford had danced into immediate success. Her name had become prominent in English country houses and London drawing-rooms. Into these her adoring husband followed her. He was taking a year's rest. He, too, was found amusing, in his own fashion. Some of the women made love to him, among them Lady Igraine. She liked his indifference; she found it spicy, for he never swerved from his devotion to "Freddie."

Lady Igraine and Mrs. Taintor were sitting in the hall. Dolly, whose only topic of conversation was invariably Meg and Meg's successes, was speaking of Gino's offer of marriage.

"But, of course, he couldn't have taken her without a shilling," said Lady Igraine.

"Yes, he would," said Dolly.

"I know Italians better than you

do," said Lady Igraine, "and it's always the same thing. People may marry without settlements, and it's all very well till they get quarreling, and then they have just as much bother as anyone else. You seem to arrange things as if married people were always to be turtle-pigeons. That's probably why you have such nasty divorces and scandals. There's nothing like one's own income."

Dolly, whose "own income" supported three, admitted that perhaps Lady Igraine might be right.

"I do hope mamma is not talking about me again," thought Meg. She knew that poverty is not *chic*. She knew that no thrift, no taste or special talent at harboring resources can make it so. Her mother's miserable little makeshifts and make-believes filled her with sorrow.

As she passed the glass doors she looked out on the gray, cool English scene. Along the dim pathway between the yew trees she saw a man approaching. Since Meg's arrival he came very often to Igraine Castle. He was a rich commoner, a widower of forty-five, a brewer, who had bought the adjacent place. He now crossed the stately gardens and came to her.

But Meg was too healthy and sane for morbid sacrifices.

"I cannot do it," she thought, "even to amuse Lady Igraine and make mamma happy. I am not for sale."

And the girl looked wistfully toward the sea. It seemed to call her across its shining waters to the land that has welcomed so many wounded hearts.



THE ONE THOUGHT

WE have most of us heard of that sweet wedded bliss—
Of two hearts that are beating as one,
And two souls with a single thought sealed with a kiss—
And have wondered, perhaps, how 'twas done.

But to those who have been by experience taught
This effect is not hard to explain;
For in most of the cases that one "single" thought
Is—"I wish I was single again!"



NECESSARY APOLOGY

HE—Newlywed is always talking about his wife's money.
SHE—That's very strange.
"Not so very. You just ought to see her."



THE ONLY EXPLANATION

SHE—They say that Miss Plainleigh is in love with herself.
HE—Great Scott! she must have a pile of money!

CERTAIN PATRIOTIC EXILES

By Mrs. Sherwood

IT seems quite curious, and a little incongruous, that the most patriotic of our exiles live in France, the country of Europe where we are wont to believe the domestic virtues are at the lowest ebb; yet there the most domestic and highly conservative of the exiles of America are domiciled. Let the traveler draw an imaginary circle about the American Episcopal Church in Paris, and he will include most of the truly respectable and not unpatriotic set of Americans who still keep their hearts open to their nation and who are most hospitable to their country people—who love America, and who come often to what they still call home.

We must not expect the French—who hate to travel—to understand or appreciate what is best in our society, or to like any American city as they love Paris. One has but to see Coquelin play the *boulevardier*, with his boot soles looking at the passing throng, to know that every Parisian prefers Paris to Paradise. Indeed, the two terms are synonymous, with a little *p* for paradise and a large one for Paris.

However, we are to consider the claims of the Americans resident in Paris to the welcome of the French people as it is always given to them. The friendly feeling engendered by the friendship of Lafayette had not died out when the American colony in Paris was started by Colonel Thorn, who was the first man from America to make Paris his home, and to live there, like a prince, for many years. Our grandfathers, going to Paris laboriously in a sailing vessel—taking

six weeks on the passage—used to bring home wonderful accounts of the beautiful “Thorn girls,” their handsome old father, and his dinners to the young princes of the house of Orléans. After him came the family of Dr. Valentine Mott, whose daughters made the American name a synonym for beauty, a distinction that is still abroad in the Mott blood. I remember seeing Mrs. Isaac Bell dancing with the Prince de Joinville at Washington in 1863, and making him a curtsy that rivaled the famous grace of Récamier. She called him “Monseigneur,” but he called her “old school friend.” As the lovely Adelaide Mott she had been almost brought up with these princes. Mrs. Ridgeway, of Philadelphia, Mrs. Moulton and Mrs. Beckwith, of New York, followed as householders. The famous complexions of the Beckwith girls outdid the American beauty rose. Then, when Louis Napoleon mounted his rickety throne, Mrs. “Lily” Moulton, a Boston girl, and Mrs. Ronalds, another Boston girl, skated themselves into the friendship of His Imperial Majesty, the come-by-chance Emperor, who reversed, in their case, the cruelty with which his uncle had treated Miss Patterson.

Everywhere it has been *woman* who proved the entering wedge to the foundation of an American colony abroad.

Then came gradually a very much respected class, who settled in Paris for business purposes. To this class the Monroes, the Lamsons, the Lanes, the Drapers, all contributed a very valuable element of security and of domicile. Although they did not for-

get their own country, they were, and always have been, the surest bond between the two countries, the most respected of exiles. Following them, and making homes that are rallying points for their country people, are the Goodridge Randolph family, the Le Roys, the ladies of the Roberts family, of Philadelphia, Countess Galli and Mrs. Ware. Miss Bryant, daughter of the great poet-editor, is now a householder very much respected in Paris. And for many years an American portrait painter, Mr. Healy, to whose pencil we owe the best portrait of Daniel Webster, lived there. The Masons and Mrs. Parker, mother of the painter, Stephen Hills Parker, and a most lovely woman, lived and died in Paris. Also Mrs. Robert L. Cutting, one of the most accomplished and beautiful women of her day and generation, made her home in Paris after the death of her husband. The Countess Coëtlogan, of Boston, has lived in Paris for twenty years, with Helen Stanley as her companion. Miss Stanley earned much fame as a translator and literary woman, and became a great friend of Madame Juliette Adam.

The noble guild of artists with their families have made Paris a home, not merely for a night, but for a lifetime. Members of the sculptor family of the Greenoughs have made their homes in Paris for years, while Mr. Meredith Read retired thither to live, after filling the Greek mission. The Eustis family, both before and after the public position filled by our late Minister, lived in Paris more than elsewhere.

The hegira of distinguished Southerners to Paris after 1861 is well known, and the names of Calvert, McCall, Meredith, Carroll, Randolph, Slidell, Murray and Mason are household words in Paris.

All this proves that at many points America and Paris are congenial.

Twenty years ago Paris was a good city in which to economize; rents, provisions and servants' wages were one-half what they were in New York,

Boston and Philadelphia; and carriage hire still remains that much cheaper. No wonder that people living on a fixed income found Paris very much more convenient and agreeable. They say (*vox populi, vox Dei*) that we have changed all that; that the two great Expositions raised prices, which never have gone down again, and that they sell steaks cut out of horses at the same price as the good and preferable ones cut out of beeves. They say that servants are less faithful, less respectful; in fact, that existence in Paris is taking on some of the tribulations that have always attended it in New York. Still, I suspect life in Paris is easier and cheaper than in New York. At any rate, these highly respected exiles continue to live there, and are the joy of that flying battery, the American contingent, which delights to cross the ferry every year. This undiscouraged army is the joy of the hotels, the providence of dress-makers, and it brings new blood to the old colony. One hopeful sign lately, however, has been the bringing back of beautiful brides foreign born, to Boston, New York, the smaller cities, and the country life of the United States, from the children of these earlier colonists—very accomplished young ladies who speak French without an accent, unless that accent has been learned from Coquelin, who may be supposed to know how to speak French.

Many American women go to Paris simply to buy their fashionable clothes, declaring that they get them so much cheaper that it pays for the voyage across and back. This is very poor political economy, and perhaps would not bear a strictly arithmetical investigation. "It would not stand the rule of three," said an old schoolteacher to his daughter. "But I do not wish it to, papa," said the pretty, newly married one; "there are only Augustus and me—just two of us." It is rather to be urged on "Augustus and me" that they should not spend so much time at the Bon Marché, but give some consideration to Notre Dame, the Cluny Musée and

the galleries of the Louvre and of the Luxembourg; that they should imitate the old residents and study their Paris.

The Hon. John Bigelow, when our Minister in Paris, found time to study up old Franklin; and he wrote a most delightful book. I have seen him gloat over a manuscript diary of Franklin that he unearthed in an old house at Passy, and bought then and there for 2,000 francs. We might, perhaps, not be rewarded as he was, nor should we make as good use of our find as did he, but it would be a more profitable way of spending an occasional morning than the pursuit of tailor-made garments, which are never ready to be tried on, or gazing at the artificial flowers in the Louvre, if we should set out on an historical quest. The two divisions of the American colony would then stand on a more equal footing—those who have come to stay and those who have only come to buy.

Paris divides itself into two climates, one the most heavenly thing, that begins on Varnishing Day, or just before, so as to give the horse-chestnuts time to hang out their perfumed tassels; and the Spring day of soft rose color and delicate violet, this time of terrestrial paradise, is to be counted on all June, July and, I suppose, August—although that month is ignored by the true *boulevardier*—and it certainly comes back in September, October and November—a lovely season to be in Paris. But with true Gallic inconsistency the climate becomes vile in Winter. Paris, very far north, is just as disagreeable as London in Winter. Why should it not be? It chooses to be dark and foggy and cold, oh, so cold! and those airy apartments are not too comfortable, even with a *calorifère*. Then these agreeable exiles go to the Riviera—than which nothing can be more delightful—to Cairo and to Rome. Perhaps in Midwinter, when kept in Paris by the grip, I have heard these exiles mourn for home, for Boston soft coal fires, for New York hot air pipes, for the sweet Quaker comforts of Philadel-

phia, for the mocking birds of New Orleans, and for the splendid dinner parties of Chicago, for—tell it not in Gath!—they do give the best dinners in Chicago, when its spoiled millionaires consent, once in ten years, to live over a Winter in their windy city in those palaces which they build merely to shut up. “Ye build, ye build, but ye enter not in.”

In the Winter, perhaps at other times, there is a shadow of homesickness now and then over all exiles. Even the prosperous Americans yield to it occasionally. It seizes us all in a foreign land, and has its roots deep in our common nature. We all lose a certain consequence that is dear to us when we pull up our roots from the soil from which we have sprung, and which has nourished us and given us the sacred ties of country and home and lineage. This nostalgia comes to us even in gay, amusing, delightful Paris, and when the word exile is used we feel a little sad even in the Rue de Washington, the Champs Élysées, the Parc Monceau, or the Rue de Rivoli. Then the best cure is to go to work. The American colony is full of art students who come over to study music and painting, to profit by the severe and accurate mode of teaching, as in the schools of law, medicine and science. The exquisitely accurate French mind is of incalculable advantage to the less definite and trained American intellect. Our intellects are like our scenery, broad, large, unformulated, lacking outline and definiteness. We need that severe French training to curb our exuberance, to teach us to husband our immense power, as we now use Niagara to run a street railroad fifty miles away.

A French boy has a pretty hard time at school, with nothing but a piece of chocolate in his little vest pocket for lunch, and the inexorable grind going on from eight in the morning until one o'clock. But when he comes out “he knows what he knows,” that fortunate boy.

The American mammas carry some of our national tenderness into the lives of their little exiles, and some

American bread and butter reddens the cheeks of their *externes*.

The fate, however, of the poor girls who have gone over to study and have been financially stranded has been a very hard one. To the relief of such there came four good angels, Mrs. Walden Pell, Mrs. Ayer and Mrs. Whitelaw Reid, and Mr. John Monroe, who pays their passage home.

Mrs. Walden Pell was the jolliest octogenarian I ever saw. She left New York after the death of her husband, who was one of the famous, handsome Pells of New York, and she adored him. Her very nice home in West Twenty-first street was abandoned, and the little plain woman, Southern in feeling, too, started her home in Paris at 1 Rue Montaigne—at least, I found her there in 1885, with a parrot perched on one shoulder and her welcome as hearty as ever.

"Ain't I pretty for eighty?" was one of her greetings, and when she gave a party on her eightieth birthday she put in the corner "*on dansera*," and she did *danser* herself in the Virginia reel. She was an accomplished musician and extravagantly fond of music. I once heard her great friend, Christine, now the Countess Miranda Nilsson, sing at her house in five different languages; and wishing us all to hear this consummate artiste in the great scene in "*Faust*" where poor *Marguerite* is tempted of the devil, she had an organ brought in and played by a master, that the artiste might have the sustainment of that most emotional instrument as an accompaniment. Everyone who could sing or play, who needed encouragement, or who could give pleasure was asked to that cosmopolitan salon of Mrs. Pell, who enjoyed to the full the distinction of being *marraine* to a large colony.

Mrs. Paran Stevens, always witty and always worth quoting, used to find fault with Mrs. Pell's catholicity. "I go to Mrs. Pell's when I am down in the mouth," said she, "for I am always very much pleased or else I am

so furious that it does me just as much good."

Perhaps Cocotte Pell, the parrot that screamed and screeched when she did not like people, deserved the fate she got. She was banished to the country on one occasion. On being asked why, Mrs. Pell said, "Oh, Cocotte got into a bad habit of telling the truth." Cocotte would tell certain people to "not come again, you sing false," or little criticisms that she overheard made by injudicious guests.

Mrs. Pell never lost her spirits and never ceased her charities to the poor art students. I once had the pleasure of driving about Paris with her and seeing her leave her cheque at many a door of now famous prima donnas, who were then poor girls. The rich and the poor alike touched her large heart, and received unfailing sympathy for their sorrows.

During the first great Exposition I saw in Paris, I used to go to her house to watch the illuminations turned on for the statuary and fine groups of the Exposition. Her form of invitation was, "Come and see me light up Paris."

"That I have seen you do for fifteen years," said her old friend, Mr. Draper.

One such woman is an inestimable advantage to any colony, and when she died, at ninety-four, "Old Aunt Orly," as she was affectionately called, was universally mourned. It is a great gift, this gift of sympathy; add on cheerfulness and love of fun and a wonderful constitution, and you have Orleana Pell.

Mrs. Ayer joined with her in the aid of the poor students. She was very generous in her gifts of money, and together they started, I believe, what is now a very great help to all students, an Artists' Home.

Mrs. Whitelaw Reid, however, with magnificent foresight and generosity, has done even more, and continues her benefactions. No wonder the careful, thrifty French people talk of the affluent American ladies as if the stream of Pactolus ran through their

parlors, and as if they ladled out dollars from their soup tureens.

Mrs. Ayer made a great impression in Paris. She wore the jewels of a queen and she entertained like one. Her love of music was great, and she was assisted by Miss Fanny Reed, who knew all about it, and whose musical salon was always a stronghold of culture and song.

Mrs. Ayer did not stop at music, but gave magnificent dinners and suppers, to the great advantage of the hungry—and one does get dreadfully hungry in Paris, for it is not the custom of the artistic to recognize the claims of the appetite. A few very poor cakes and a bowl of extremely inefficient punch constitute the usual treat. So one found at Mrs. Ayer's bountiful feasts many kings out of business, hangers-on of those fugitive and airy thrones which always seem to be floating around in midair in Europe, and other gentlemen of poetic vision, excellent manners, high connections and no money. She was very funny about them herself, and sometimes made a clean sweep of them all out of her salon.

"Who is that?" asked a friend of hers, pointing to a pretty gentleman who had got stuck in the doorway while bringing her an immense basket of flowers. "Oh," said she, "if there is an upheaval he will be King of Roumania. Perhaps it will be well if it comes now."

This amiable woman formed a great friendship for the Countess of Caithness, Duchesse de Pomar, who believed herself an incarnation of Mary, Queen of Scots; and as she was another Golconda, and wore as many sapphires, emeralds, diamonds and pearls as there are sands in the desert, they used to give each other most magnificent gifts. Mrs. Ayer led off with a smelling bottle with an emerald stopper; the Countess followed with a jeweled card case.

"Where are your mother and Mrs. Ayer?" asked a lady of the Duc de Pomar, who was very ready witted. "In the next room, playing jackstraws with sapphires," said he.

These two wealthy dames gave many brilliant entertainments, to the great joy of the aspirants to thrones and the public generally. When Death claimed them he silenced two very generous hearts.

There seems to be a much more kindly feeling toward Americans in Paris than there is in London—or, at least, than used to be the case. Perhaps the emotional, free, gay spirits of the American finds more sympathy in France than in sober England. And France is by no means any longer an aristocratic country. It is the most democratic of republics. I remember hearing a French lady of the *ancien régime* (there are some such ladies left) say that she had been to a splendid soirée at the house of the Premier and Madame Tirard, for which three thousand invitations had been sent out, and for which such artists as Mmes. Célie Montalant, Reichenberg, Rose Caron, Kraust, Sybil Sanderson and Brandes, MM. Maurel, Diemar, Delsarte and Laffenal, had offered their services in coöperation with the Commissioner-General of the Exhibition of 1889. Said she: "My hair was dressed by Tirard's brother, and Tirard himself was originally a manufacturer of false jewelry."

I knew two great aristocrats, Monsieur et Madame Grandmaison—he an intimate friend of the Comte de Paris—who were full of such stories, nor would one of them enter the Élysée. I once went to this palace of the people in the day of President Carnot, and the attendance did seem rather a mob. Far more tranquil and elegant, I must confess, was a ball in the Faubourg.

But the American colony had its own life, nor cared particularly for either the Faubourg or the Chaussée d'Antin. What it did care for, it got, however.

Mrs. Hughes Hallett, a Philadelphia woman, who has lived in Europe a quarter of a century, very hospitably in London, and now at Dinard, always in the smart set everywhere, could give us some points on the world's changes here and there. She could

say who have been our most favored exiles, she being one of the most noted and respected of them herself.

Mrs. Potter Palmer has held two of the highest offices of trust in Russia and in Paris, having been appointed by the President himself to the post of Lady President of the recent Exposition, and by her own city to the coronation of the Czar. By her beauty, charm of manner and *savoir faire* she has made a great addition to the ever-growing fame of the American woman. Her splendid jewels, her great wealth, her abounding hospitality, add a bead to that long rosary on which the history of opulent ladies is strung, and although she still lives with us in her own city, she may be considered a shooting star whose brilliancy now and then illuminates Europe.

Mrs. Mackay, on the other hand, is very decidedly an exile. She is very popular in London, where she entertains most brilliantly. I remember at one of her evenings in London in the Jubilee year, seeing the troupe of the Comédie Française play; Mme. Reichemberg and Coquelin *cadet* together being immensely amusing. In

the centre of the room stood Consuelo Yznaga, Lady Mandeville, not yet a duchess, beautiful, in a very pronounced blue, with pearls. She seemed to me to have the most aristocratic bearing of any lady in the room, although royalty was there.

I am sorry to say that Mrs. McClellan has, I believe, become one of our permanent exiles; yet she is a patriotic one. She has lost her best friends in the deaths of the Duc d'Aumale and the Comte de Paris.

We have been very fortunate in our Ministers—and our Ambassador—to the French Republic. Such men as Mr. Bigelow, Mr. Morton, Mr. Whitelaw Reid, Mr. Eustis, Mr. McLane and General Porter, and indeed many others, have won for us a thorough welcome with the best French people, and save that I am very sorry to lose them here, I cannot wonder at the departure of certain exiles to that "fair and pleasant land of France," toward which poor Marie Stuart turned her beautiful eyes as she was hurried off to the cold and gloomy shades of Holyrood Palace.



A COPTIC BANQUET

THEY brought their mummied dead to grace the feast,
And ranged abreast the board their ebon biers,
And laughed and fed, and when the mirth increased,
Tankards of wine mocked lacrymals of tears.

They dulled the ashen touch of death and bade
Erasing dissolution's hand to stay;
For they would not forget, however glad,
Hearts once, mayhap, that bantered them be gay.

Such banquets has the soul in state decreed,
Like those swart Coptics of time's nether night,
And pledged the nonce with Joy's cup-clinking breed
The balm-swathed visage of a dead delight.

JOHN MYERS O'HARA.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

(A GRIMM TALE MADE GAY)

By Guy Wetmore Carryl

MISS GUINEVERE PRATT was so beautiful that
She couldn't remember the day
When one of her swains hadn't taken the pains
To send her a mammoth bouquet;
And the postman had found, on the whole of his round,
That no one received such a lot
Of bulky epistles, as, waiting his whistles,
The beautiful Guinevere got.

A significant sign that her charm was divine
Was seen in society, when
The chaperons sniffed, with their eyebrows alift:
"Whatever's got into the men?"
There was always a man who was holding her fan,
And twenty that danced in details,
And a couple of mourners, who brooded in corners,
And gnawed their mustaches and nails.

John Jeremy Platt wouldn't stay in the flat,
For his beautiful daughter he missed.
When he'd taken his tub he would hie to his club
And join in a rubber of whist.
At the end of a year it was perfectly clear
That he'd never computed the cost,
For he hadn't a penny to settle the many
Ten thousands of dollars he'd lost.

F. Ferdinand Fife was a student of life;
He was coarse and excessively fat,
With a face like a goat's, but he held all the notes
Of ruined John Jeremy Platt!
With an adamant smile that was brimming with guile,
He said: "I am took with the face
Of your beautiful daughter, and wed me she oughter,
To save you from utter disgrace."

Miss Guinevere Pratt didn't hesitate at
Her duty's imperative call.
When they looked at the bride, all the chaperons cried:
"She isn't so bad, after all!"
Of the desolate men, there were something like ten
Who took up political lives,
And the cynical mourners came out of their corners
And married most hideous wives.

But the beautiful wife of F. Ferdinand Fife
 Was the wildest that ever was known;
 She'd grumble and glare till the man didn't dare
 To say that his soul was his own.
 She sneered at his ills, and quadrupled his bills,
 And spent nearly twice what he earned;
 Her husband deserted, and frivoled and flirted,
 Till his horrible lesson he learned.

He repented too late, and his hideous fate
 Upon him so heavily sat
 That he swore at the day when he sat down to play
 At whist with John Jeremy Platt.
 He was dead in a year, and the fair Guinevere
 In society sparkled again;
 And the chaperons fluttered their fans, as they muttered:
 "She's getting exceedingly plain."

The Moral: Predicaments often are found
 That beautiful duty contrives to get round;
 But greedy extortioners better beware
 When dutiful beauty begins to get square!



LUCK AT LAST

DEACON PASSNIP—Hooray! Samantha, hooray!
 MRS. PASSNIP—Why, what's the matter, Hiram?
 MR. PASSNIP—Hooray! We'll be able to pay off the morgidge now! I've
 just been run over by the Astorfellers' autymobile.



VERY AMUSING

WIFE—What's funny in that letter you are reading?
 HUSBAND—It's from Bobson. He asks if I don't want to pay him that
 \$10 I owe him.



AN INEVITABLE INFIRMITY

SHE—Your friend seems to have a very poor memory.
 HE—Well, no wonder. He was in an information bureau over ten
 years.

THE NEW WEEKLY

By Mrs. Poultney Bigelow

IT was not a bad garden. The drought had not yet set in; the four cherry trees were full of ripening fruit; the old stone wall was half-hidden by a flourishing vine full of the promise of grapes; eight tall lily stalks were laden with buds that displayed silver cracks between the green, and there were roses enough to show how flowers can persist in gladdening the world in spite of neglect. The house was the usual square, gray stucco structure, with rooms running from front to back, two on each story; the kitchen was a little tacked-on afterthought, with just room enough for two maids to quarrel in and make delectable omelettes. If the window-panes were nearly all damaged, and the bed curtains a hundred years old, what did it matter? There was a glimpse of turquoise sea from the top floor, and day and night there was a salt breeze blowing gently through the house.

If there really was an objection to the Villa Glycine it was the laundry opposite. It was a lively laundry, even for a French one. Nothing could look more demure than the small, square, clean, brick structure—when it was shut; but it was nearly always open. And then a score of macaws—French macaws, and Bretons at that—could not have competed successfully with the fair ironers in the matter of noise.

At night, when the young women went home—sometimes they worked till the small hours—Mademoiselle Bathilde, the fair proprietress, would welcome her family and friends, and the festiveness of the occasion could not be shut out from the ears of the dwellers in the Villa Glycine.

"I suppose it was the laundry that made it so cheap," observed Mrs. Grove one day, when she and her husband had been obliged to retire to the garden.

"I suppose so," said Mr. Grove, adding, drily, "When you took the house you overlooked the laundry."

"And now," said his wife, "the laundry overlooks us."

"Jokes will not atone!" said Mr. Grove, and his wife became pensive.

After all, it was cheap, even if one had to run the gauntlet all day of Mademoiselle Bathilde's objectionable black eyes, as she lolloped out of the window, commenting on each event as it occurred. Seven hundred francs for six months, with linen and *argenterie*. The *argenterie* was represented by a dozen aluminum spoons and forks. The linen was plentiful, but when it came to the tablecloths and napkins, they could not be distinguished from sheets and towels.

"Still, it's France, and it's a holiday, isn't it, Larry?" Mrs. Grove always ended up; and at that point Larry always kissed her. They loved each other very much, the Groves. Several years of constant companionship had shown them that man and wife need not necessarily be enemies. Their tastes were the same, and their faults different—a good basis for married peace.

Grove was a journalist who wanted to own a paper. Amy Grove meant that he should, before he was much older. All Winter she had been hoarding so that Larry might have six months abroad, for he was overworked and not particularly strong. He had engaged himself to write a series of papers for a leading maga-

zine, and the Villa Glycine seemed an ideal spot in which to do the work.

The pretty seaside town was filling fast by the time the cherries were ripe.

Mrs. Grove's wardrobe was of the simplest, but as she knew few people, and did not desire to show herself at the Casino, it was sufficient for her needs. Larry told her that blue linen, with her inside, was lovelier far than satin on any other woman, and she believed him. There was one sad day when Mademoiselle Bathilde tried to put on the blue linen, and her opulent charms split it down the back. Amy wept, and it was such a trial that she quite forgot something important she wished to tell Larry.

It came to her when she was sitting in the garden, sewing up the split. In the afterthought-kitchen the cook was clattering pans and making something for dinner which smelled like nothing one ever smells in England or America—perhaps because the people there who keep French cooks have such large houses that the savor of their preparations can't creep up stairs as it does in small ones.

Delphine, the cook, was also abusing Mademoiselle Bathilde, which was very soothing to Mrs. Grove; Larry was reading a pile of American papers in a tippy green iron chair with a game leg.

"Larry," said his wife, "is it wrong for a married woman to flirt?"

"Eh, what?" said Grove, abstractedly; then collecting himself, "Wrong? It's beastly!"

"Even if she loves her husband?"

"Worse, then—disgusting!"

"But if she flirts with a purpose? If it helps her husband?"

"Nonsense! Decent husbands don't want to be told such things or helped that way."

"I have always thought it didn't matter what you did if you only told your husband."

"The deuce! Have you been going on that tack?"

"Well, you see, I never have

flirted, because I was married to you. Now, if I'd been married to another fellow, I'd have flirted with you."

Grove, much mollified, put down the paper and regarded his wife.

"What are you thinking about?—and what are you sewing?"

"My blue linen; that horrid Bathilde tried to put her hateful French self into the skirt, and she couldn't get in. I'm thinking, Larry, I'm going to give up my sense of honor for you."

"I prefer you with your sense of honor, if you don't mind."

"Do you want to edit a new weekly?"

"You know I do."

"To do as you like with it, and get a big salary?"

"Yes."

"Well, I think I can help you."

Grove was now interested. He entirely abandoned the paper.

"Tell me what you mean," said he.

"Did you ever hear of Mr. Gilston?"

"Of course."

"Do you know him?"

"No."

"I do."

That was a dramatic moment.

"How do you know him? When? Where?" demanded Grove, in some excitement.

"I met him at the club this afternoon, and—he liked me."

Larry laughed.

"How do you know when a man likes you?"

"Oh, because—a woman can always tell. Besides, he said I was fascinating."

"The boulder! That stamps him!"

"Yes, I saw what he was, and I made a plan. I intend to be *so* charming that he will do something nice for you. Don't look cross. I sha'n't flirt *much*, but I shall drop little hints about our poverty and your unappreciated genius; and I won't flatter, only be very, *very* sweet; and I *know* I can do it."

"Upon my word, you're an em-

bryo Becky Sharp! Isn't he married?"

"Immensely married—with eight children. His wife has a Roman nose and no sense of humor. I am counting on that."

Grove laughed loud and long.

"What fiends you women are—even the best of you! What if you sow dissension in this worthy middle-class family, and make a scandal besides? This is an awful place for scandal."

"I am strong in a sense of my innocence, and I have you!"

She looked a saint as she spoke.

Grove laughed again.

"And what does he look like?" he inquired.

Amy paused to reflect.

"Like an Irish-American dynamiter," said she.

"And what's the first step in your infernal scheme?"

"To dress in our very best and go to the Casino. He's coming on purpose to-night."

At this point, the fragrance in the kitchen having solidified and been dished up, the conspirators went in to dinner.

II

JEREMY GILSTON began his career as an office boy, like nearly all the modern millionaires. In fact, to be sure of success it appears that one should have swept out an office in early youth. Jeremy's sweepings turned to gold, like everything that he subsequently touched. At the age of fifty he retired from business a multi-millionaire, with a highly respectable wife and a numerous progeny, ranging from eighteen to six years of age.

Perhaps in the life of every husband, even the most attached, there comes a time when he finds that he can admire one of the women he did not marry. He need not necessarily be false to the partner of his responsibilities; he may only be taking an innocent recess. For many years Mr. Gilston had returned from his office at the same hour every day to hear

about measles, schooling and the price of meat. Mrs. Gilston was not a reading woman, nor had she ever lost, during a long period of increasing wealth, her intense interest in domestic economy. She had married Jeremy when he was young and comparatively struggling, and she continued from sheer force of habit to plan, during her quiet hours, notably in church, how Louisa's frock would let down for Jane, and father's ties, with a little pressing, look well on George.

Jeremy was just now at the particular point in his life when he realized that his remaining years ought to be enjoyed.

Since coming abroad for the first time he had been inexpressibly charmed by the irresponsible, gay manner of life displayed by what he called "the fashionable set." He, whose toil had been for years unremitting, delighted in idling away the mornings on the beach, the afternoons at the club, the evenings at the Casino. He expanded with the sense that he was now one of that distinguished leisure class whose doings are minutely recorded in the Sunday papers. It was no longer a matter of indifference to him that "Mrs. Jimmy Meredith looked charming in a smart white piqué," or that "Miss Gertrude Longworth was, as usual, gowned to perfection in mauve chiffon." He even hoped some time or other to read that "the well-known Western millionaire, Mr. Jeremy Gilston, was addicted to pink ties." As indeed he was—with socks to match.

Owing to his constant admonitions on the subject, Mrs. Gilston had a great many dresses. She bought them grudgingly, and they were nearly always wrong somewhere. Her bonnets had strings six inches wide, when everyone else was wearing toques. There was always a great deal of white feather about her headgear and a cold glitter about her gowns.

On the evening when the Gilstons hoped to meet the Groves, they were both clothed in a distinctly noticeable manner; she in white, scintillating

with steel, he in gray tweed, with a sky-blue shirt, a pink tie and silk socks striped blue and pink. A scarlet carnation in his buttonhole was, as it were, the exclamation point calling attention to the general effect.

The evening began with dulness. The Gilstons had taken the best house in the place, but they did not yet know many people. They sat in the Casino balcony, looking in at the people dancing—slender, perfectly dressed American women; piquant, full-figured French women; English women, handsome or dowdy, as the case might be, and men who in few cases were either good-looking or respectable enough to be worthy to be their partners.

Mr. Gilston was distinctly bored. Between the dances a crowd drifted along the balcony, walked up and down, or sat at little tables and ordered drinks or ices.

"Bella, will you have something?" asked the millionaire, hoping to enliven the occasion by a cocktail.

"I haven't got over my dinner yet," answered Mrs. Jeremy, whereupon the conversation lapsed.

Gilston strolled round to look at the "little horses," idly staked a twenty-franc piece on the yellow, and of course won. His usual wearisome luck made him sigh. As he turned with his winnings in his hand he nearly caromed against Mrs. Larry Grove.

"You here, Mr. Gilston?" she cried, archly. "That *is* nice!" She intended from the first to "put it on with a trowel."

Gilston's face brightened.

"This is my husband," continued Amy, putting forward Larry, who looked even cleaner and comelier than usual.

"Sir," said Gilston, almost with enthusiasm, "you are a man I have wanted to meet. I have known you through your writings for a considerable time, and wanted to make your acquaintance."

"You are very kind," murmured Grove. In his soul he blushed to think how much *he* wanted to meet

Gilston, and from what sordid motives.

"Mrs. Gilston is sitting over yonder," proceeded the capitalist. "Let me present you to her."

In five minutes Grove found himself virtually tête-à-tête with the Roman nose, where he remained for a full hour of sixty minutes, while Amy and Gilston were comfortably settled in the dark corner usually considered sacred to engaged persons or triflers of the deepest dye.

At the end of that hour Grove knew several things:

That Louisa Gilston's hair fell out awfully on account of the sea air.

That George Gilston wanted to go to West Point, only he was short-sighted.

That Dorothy, the youngest, couldn't sleep for gnat-bites.

That the Gilston *chef* stole the butter, and no one dared to remonstrate with him.

That the French bathed seldom and had no moral standards, and

That Mr. Gilston was starting a new weekly in the Autumn.

Having sat through the butter, short-sight, gnat-bites and other things, Larry was almost asleep by the time the only item of interest was reached. Before he could make Mrs. Gilston enlarge on the theme the errant couple reappeared, complacent and unashamed, and Grove had added another new and important fact to those already at hand:

That Mrs. Larry Grove was an accomplished and unscrupulous flirt.

This opening evening set the pattern for those that followed. Grove became a specialist in the Gilston family history. He visited the great villa and made the acquaintance of Louisa and George, and Dorothy and Edwin, and Jane and Bella, and John and Elma. He sampled the performances of the peculating *chef*, and found them the most interesting feature of the house.

When he yawned constantly that Summer, and Amy said, "It's liver!" he answered, "No, it isn't; it's Gilston."

After one of their festivities they would walk home together by moonlight and compare notes.

"What did she say to you?"

"That it was convenient to have children near together, because the clothes could descend from one to the other. What did *he* say to *you*?"

"That I was fit for any society—that it was a shame I had to live in a hovel opposite a laundry, when I would adorn a palace."

"What cheek! Hang his impudence! And what did you say?"

"I said that poverty was hard, but that there were some things much harder."

"What did you mean?"

"I meant talking to him."

Larry crowed with laughter.

"What else did you say?"

"That there is a gap in my life. He was sorry he couldn't fill it. He said I was dangerously fascinating, and I said that if that were so I should always use my power for good!"

"Did he like that?"

"I don't know. It was dark under the trees, and I was shaking so I was afraid he would hear my dress rustle."

"At that time, Amy, I was telling Mrs. G. how full of ambition you were, and how I longed to justify your faith in me; and she said that if she hadn't always kept down the butcher's bill Jeremy would never have got where he is. That was a nasty one for me!"

A peal of laughter rang out in the quiet night.

Then Laurence became grave.

"I don't like it, Amy; I think he's in earnest. He's in love with you. He never says a word about the weekly."

"Well, for that matter, I think Mrs. Gilston is in love with you. She has grown very cold to me of late."

"She's jealous. You see, she talks to me only about George, Louisa, Elma, John, Jane, Dorothy, Bella and Edwin. She never tells me that I'm wasted in a hovel. There is the hovel—and Bathilde hanging out of the laundry window. Say good-night. She may make a scandal about you!"

III

THE "leisure class" was a class that had time to talk scandal. At afternoon teas the cups and saucers fairly clinked with fright at the things they heard. The Decalogue was not long enough to make the breaking of it amusing.

People invented crimes when they were discussing their friends.

Of course, the Gilston-Grove quartette did not escape. The intimacy was thoroughly canvassed in all the places where society met to bore itself. There were a few pleasant, pure-minded Anglo-Saxons who laughed at the whole thing and only criticised the millionaire's taste in socks. They pointed out the domestic virtues of Mrs. Gilston and the mutual affection of Mr. and Mrs. Grove as a proof that flirtation was no element in the intimacy. People liked the Groves, and tolerated Amy's two gowns, while the men found Larry a good fellow, though he never drank or gambled.

Whether Mrs. Gilston was jealous or not, she continued to cultivate the society of her new friends.

One evening, when Larry Grove was absent—he had had to go to a neighboring town to see an English friend who was ill—Amy dined with the Gilstons and went afterward to the Casino. The evening was dull enough, and she was glad when it was time to go home. Then came a discussion as to whether she should drive alone in a *fiacre* to the Villa Glycine. It was twelve o'clock, and Amy had rather a horror of the Breton cab drivers, but she insisted on going alone. Gilston, on the contrary, insisted that he would accompany her. Mrs. Gilston, during the discussion, stood looking somewhat stony in the moonlight. It ended in her going alone in her own carriage, and her husband departed with Mrs. Larry.

"I don't feel comfortable about Mrs. Gilston," said Amy, as they drove away. "I could easily have come alone."

"Nonsense!" said Gilston. "You

are too young and pretty to go about alone."

His manner was so doting that Amy drew back and said, quite stiffly: "The *cocher* only knows whether he gets a good *pourboire* or not. I've fought with most of them about the way they treat their horses."

"What a night for a drive!" said Gilston, after a few moments' silence. "If I were as free as you I would propose going on along the sea. The moon makes me feel quite foolish!"

"How curious! It makes me feel sleepy—I always think bed the most attractive place at this hour."

Gilston felt somewhat repelled, but persevered.

"I want to be of use to you," he began. "A woman like you ought to have everything—diamonds—ropes of pearls—that's the thing now, ain't it?—plenty of servants, and a fine house. You weren't made to be poor."

"Oh, I sha'n't always be poor," said Mrs. Larry. "My husband will make money. He's still young and very clever."

"Very clever," assented Jeremy, with a heartiness that astonished Mrs. Larry. "And you love each other?" added he.

"Of course."

"Then the rest doesn't matter. I've got a dear, good wife, too."

Amy breathed with a sigh of surprised relief. She had feared that the moon was going to be responsible for unpleasant things; but she saw now that the millionaire was anxious to be a loyal friend, nothing more. Her conscience pricked a little as she reflected how she had spread her attractions, peacock-like, under his nose during the past few weeks.

A sudden gush of affection for the absent one welled up within her.

"You don't know my Larry," she said, fervently. "He is nice."

The rickety old horse had by this time drawn them up to the door of the Villa Glycine.

The laundry was a glare of light. The windows were wide open, showing the whitewashed walls and ceiling, and out of one lolled Mademoiselle

Bathilde. When she saw Mrs. Grove and Mr. Gilston alighting, her eyes sparkled with silent emotion, and she smiled broadly.

"*Bon soir, madame,*" she called out, in her robust, Breton voice.

Amy smiled at Gilston.

"We are lost!" she said. "That woman watches me day and night! All the town will know you brought me home at midnight."

"I should be ashamed to have them think I let you come alone," said Gilston, sturdily. "Good-night. I'll see you to-morrow."

But he did not. Mademoiselle Bathilde did the washing of the Gilston family; next day, being Saturday, she escorted the girl who carried home the linen. She had friends in the kitchen, and stayed some time talking with them.

On Sunday Mrs. Gilston arrived at Villa Glycine early in the afternoon. Amy received her, while Larry smoked in the garden, having pleaded that he had earned a vacation by a sleepless night with his sick friend.

Mrs. Gilston's fine profile looked as changeless as the everlasting hills. Amy saw at once that something unpleasant was coming, and hastily marshaled her forces.

"Mrs. Grove," said the lady, "I am an outspoken woman; I say what I want to say, not what people want to hear."

"A very good plan," said Amy, cordially; "then one person at least is sure to be pleased."

Mrs. Gilston suspected levity, and grew grimmer.

"It is only right for me to tell you that you and Mr. Gilston are the talk of the place," she proceeded.

Amy felt a little naughty.

"Not really!" she exclaimed. "Why, last week I suppressed a report that you and Larry were in love!"

Mrs. Gilston gasped.

"I? a respectable, middle-aged mother of a family?" she cried.

"Yes! Isn't it funny? I think we can all afford to laugh."

"But you were seen by that laundry woman—disgusting person!—

out driving in the small hours with Jeremy!"

"Oh, it was Bathilde! How nice! But the hour wasn't small—it was the biggest one of the night—twelve, in fact."

"You are pleased to be witty—but you don't answer my charge."

"Dear Mrs. Gilston, how could I deny it? You saw me leave the Casino with your husband. We came straight home."

"And he did not go in? That woman said he entered and stayed some time."

"Sweet creature! She is confusing herself with me! Not that Mr. Gilston paid her a visit. I don't mean that. He went right back to you, so far as I know."

Amy was becoming a little vexed. Her scheme of "helping" Larry had not included a jealous wife, and she didn't like it.

"Look here, Mrs. Gilston," she said; "you don't mean to hint that I take any special interest in your husband, do you? I should no more think of flirting with Mr. Gilston than I should of being jealous of you and Larry when you sit in that darkest corner of the garden. I know what you talk about—generally the *chef* and the children, or something like that. Well, Mr. Gilston and I the other night talked mostly of *you*."

"Of *me*?" said Mrs. Gilston, changing color.

"Yes, positively—and it was moonlight, too! I told him how much I loved Larry, and he told me what a good wife he had."

The unchangeable profile quivered. Amy's heart warmed to her.

"Mrs. Grove," said the elder woman, "despise me if you like, but if you had summered and wintered with a man, had known him when he was obscure and poor, had been a real mother to his eight children, had worked for him and been real fond of him, and had kept down his butcher's bill——"

This climax made Amy smile, but it was a damp smile.

"Yes, I know," she said.

"—you wouldn't like it, when your hair was getting to that awful pepper-and-salt stage when a woman doesn't quite know whether she's young or old—if your husband was to take up with a young, pretty woman—you know what I mean!"

Amy took her hand.

"Dear lady," she said, "I do know! Any woman who tries to draw away a man from the wife who has borne the burden and heat of the day is a sneak. She ought to be whipped. But I give you my word that Mr. Gilston cares only for you, and I care only for Larry."

At that the Roman nose wrinkled, and a spasm of tears rippled over the once unyielding countenance. And then these two absurd women kissed each other.

Gilston, coming in by the front door, and Larry, entering by the back, found them in a close embrace.

Both men looked puzzled, and Gilston looked pleased.

"There! see that!" he said, gaily. "Everything's pleasant. They like each other; we like each other. We're all comfortable. What's the matter with your being the editor of the new weekly?"

Larry opened his mouth soundlessly. It had come at last.

"Oh, you look surprised," said Gilston, genially. "Didn't know anything about it, I s'pose. I've been leading up to it all Summer! Why, hang it, we've been courting you both as if we wanted to elope with you! I wanted you to like us. I had my eye on you—in print—long before you ever came here. What do you say? Is it a bargain? Ten thousand a year and an interest in the paper. There's money in it."

Mrs. Larry has more than two dresses now.



LIFE AND LOVE

HAVE I loved? Have I lived? An thou askest, dear,
 To live is to love, I say;
 I have lived and loved for many a year,
 And I live and I love to-day.

And some of my love to the living I give,
 And some to but lifeless clay,
 For some of my loves yet love and live,
 And some have been borne away.

But hither or thither to me is one—
 Once to love is to love for aye;
 And I kneel to a love in the churchyard yon
 As I kneel to thee, love, to-day.

Now the shadows of evening above me bend,
 The sky in the west is gray;
 But still I must love to the very end,
 For I know no other way.

And though of fools, all others above,
 There is none like an old, they say,
 If it be folly to live and love,
 Let me be a fool alway.

CHARLES HENRY WEBB.



BETRAYED BY AMBITION

ETHEL—No, no, Percy. I can never be your wife. I have adopted the stage.

PERCY—Thank heaven, I have found you out at last!

ETHEL—Sir! what do you mean?

PERCY—I have long suspected you were not young! Now—but never mind. Adopt an orphan asylum, if you wish. Farewell forever!



TOO DANGEROUS

BESSIE—Do you think he is afraid to propose to me?

CARRIE—Shouldn't wonder. He told me he was wedded to bachelor life.

WHAT MOVED HER

By Mary Fenollosa

THE pretty drawing-room, with its flowers and photographs, its lace hangings and rich upholstery, might have belonged to Fifth Avenue, but in reality it was in the lower left wing of a certain fashionable "foreign" residence of Nob Hill, in Tokio, Japan.

In the neatly burnished grate a fire slept as a cat sleeps, opening luminous, mysterious eyes at incalculable intervals, and then sinking back into lazy contentment. It seemed to be keeping a sort of indulgent watch over the young man who paced so restlessly up and down the long Wilton rug, giving frequent, furtive glances toward the door, and an occasional guilty start.

He had boldly done a shameless thing in sending to his ex-fiancée, up stairs, a card that bore a name other than his own. To make matters worse, under this fictitious name had been written the words "Presented by Henry D. Herndon," and Henry D. Herndon was the ex-fiancée's brother in New York.

Miss Herndon had come to Japan in hurried flight from the very man who was now tricking her into receiving him. His subterfuge was not creditable, he knew, but the time had come for desperate measures. What would she say when first she opened the door? Steps approached from without, and Mr. Paget's heart quaked. But the one who entered was only a little Japanese maidservant bringing in cake and wine.

"Mees Hon-don-oo be dow-un ver' soon," she announced, in her soft, unreal voice, but with a smile that seemed to make the broken words personal homage.

Paget smiled in return. "Are you the veritable Madame Chrysanthème?" he asked, as he lifted the glass.

The housemaid did not understand nevertheless she giggled entrancingly.

A cold draught swept in through the half-opened door, and with it came Miss Ethelberta Herndon. At sight of him the conventional smile of welcome died. The false card was in her hand, and she lifted it slowly, to read it again.

Madame Chrysanthème turned her head in a frightened, bird-like fashion, and hurried from the room as fast as her pigeon toes would take her. Miss Herndon wheeled about as if to follow, but Paget was at the door.

"Bertie, listen! Only one moment! I have come all the way to Japan——"

The girl raised her eyes with such a look of scorn that his words faltered.

"So I perceive," she said. "Yet I should not have gathered the fact from—this." She flung his card to the floor, where it lay, face up, between them.

Paget made no answer.

"Even I should not have dreamed you capable of assuming a false name."

"Your own brother introduced me under it."

"That does not increase my respect for either of you. Doubtless you tricked him into it."

"Trickery is unnecessary between reasonable people or—friends. In your case we both felt it to be the last resort."

She drew in her breath sharply.

"Have you come all this way to insult me—again?"

"I have never insulted you. I have come to plead."

"You must have known that it would be useless."

"Your brother warned me, but I was not willing to believe you as selfish, narrow and vindictive as he seemed to assume."

She winced. He saw the gesture of pain, and his heart softened.

"Bertie! we were to have been married in a week. Think what that means!"

"Hush!" she said, trembling, "how dare you mention it—now?"

"How could you have been willing to throw me over at the whispered scandal of a *cad*, a man who had been my guest at dinner the night before? You have made me a laughing-stock! You refused to hear my defense, even from your own brother. And, to cap the climax, you ran away to Japan, shirking it all, and throwing that much more ridicule on me."

"There is no need of going into that again," said the girl, her face whitening. "It is all at an end."

"But *is* it?" he cried. "Do I look like a man to be flung aside without reason, and take the flinging calmly?"

She did not meet his eye. "I must go," she murmured. "I cannot listen."

Paget seemed not to hear. "Aside from losing you, I am not inclined to accept defeat at the hands of a peaching cad like Babson."

"I never said that it was Mr. Babson who told me."

"No," said Paget; "but he was the one. Babbie has one eye now, nine fingers and seven whole ribs."

"You didn't *fight* him?" said Miss Herndon, nervously.

"One can't fight a bran sack; one can only punch! I punched!"

"Oh! did it—did it get into the papers?" Miss Herndon clasped her hands.

"That's the first thing a woman thinks of," remarked Paget, bitterly.

"I'll leave you to find that out in other

ways. I'm here now to plead for myself."

Miss Herndon walked across to a window and stared out. A fan-shaped section of Tokio lay beneath her—a blue-gray aggregation of house roofs and whitish streets, like spokes, running down to the hazy rim of Shinagawa Bay. No sun had shone all day. The world seemed colorless, flat and dispirited.

Paget, with that gesture so common to men, put one elbow on the low mantelshelf and stared down into the coals. Without raising his voice he said:

"Whatever the result of this visit, I owe it to myself to state, once for all, that I did *not* speak lightly of you at that last dinner. Good heavens!" he went on, impetuously, "to think that I should be saying this to *you*—that there should be need for me to say it!"

She moved restlessly, but did not speak.

He turned again to the fire. "Well, at that affair—my farewell bachelor dinner—even the necessary toasts jarred. You were so much to me, so apart from other women, that it was torture to hear your name on the lips of others. I had just drunk to the dearest, sweetest, snowiest woman on God's earth, when an Iscariot at my elbow whispered—'And the boodle, old man! Don't forget the boodle!' The glass was still at my lips, but I set it down, angrily, and said: 'That's a toast you will have to drink alone!'"

Miss Herndon was drawing nearer, inch by inch. Her face showed the strain of intense listening.

"Most of the boys were half-seas over," he went on. "They would have drunk to the Pope or the devil with equal readiness. The toast was proposed, and many drank, not knowing what it meant, but I—I rushed for the hall and poured ice-water on my head to keep from committing murder."

"Was it—Mr. Babson?" she asked, in an excited whisper.

"What do you take me for?" he

flashed out. "Gentlemen don't betray their guests, or their hosts. That is left for the puppies who get in by mistake."

"Then it *was* Mr. Babson," she said, with conviction.

Paget smiled in spite of himself, but a moment after his face grew hard.

"Yet Mr. Babson's insinuations were enough to make you throw me over. And we were to have been married in a week."

"How was I to know?" she retorted, stung into self-defense. "Even my brother could not deny that such a toast had been drunk."

"Did he tell you who proposed it?"

"No! I only asked him the one question, whether it had or had not been proposed. I wouldn't let him say anything more."

"So he told me. You would not even read my letters. Was that just or kind?"

She stood before him with head and arms drooping. Her hair alone might ensnare a man's soul. How often had he kissed those shining waves! A mad desire to seize her in his arms—no matter what happened after—to feel her, to hold her there once more, surged into his blood and brain. But no; he must control himself—he must press the advantage he had gained.

"Then have you nothing to say to me, Bertie?"

She raised her head as if at the touch of a spur.

"If you are demanding an apology, here it is: I acted too hastily. I humbly beg your pardon."

Paget hurriedly changed his tactics.

"I didn't want an apology, certainly not one given in that spirit. I only want things to be as they were."

"That is impossible."

"Why, how should it be? If we understand each other——"

She glanced meaningly at the card that still lay on the floor between them.

He flushed. "Pshaw! Of what importance is that? Less than a trifle! If you loved me you would excuse any means that brought us together

again. Oh, Bertie, I know you *did* love me once. You cannot have changed altogether!"

She gave him no answer, but moved in a slow, troubled way toward the door.

Paget stooped for the card, tore it viciously into halves and threw it on the fire. At the sudden leaping up of the flames the girl turned.

"Is this the end of everything?" asked Paget.

She nodded. The movement sent two tears out from under her drooping lashes.

"Oh, Bertie!" he cried in despair, "will you wreck our two lives for this foolish pride? Can nothing move you?"

"Nothing!" she said, but her lips quivered.

"It is the last time I shall ask. Can nothing move you?"

"Nothing!"

At this moment a faint underground shiver was felt, a jelly-like spasm, as if the earth had suddenly turned to a huge blanc-mange. Miss Herndon paused and looked around wonderingly. A second vibration came, much stronger than the first. Paget's eyes met hers.

"Why, what's up?" he asked.

The third convulsion was upon them. This time the floor cracked, windows chattered as if in an ague, and the chin of a Chinese mandarin on the mantelshelf clicked against his porcelain collar. There was a sound of fleeing feet overhead. A servant ran out into the garden and peered up toward the chimney tops. Miss Herndon was very pale.

"An earthquake!" she gasped.

"They have been telling me about them. We shall be crushed!"

She seized Paget's sleeve, as if to drag him away, but he caught her in his arms.

The fourth vibration made the others insignificant. Flower vases, Buddhistic images, photograph stands and ivory statuettes went over in one jingling crash. There was a hideous sound of tearing in the walls. The piano gave a loud, harmonic wail.

The world had become a reeling, chaotic horror.

"Why don't you *move?*" shrieked the girl, as she struggled to free herself. "Oh, Jack, don't wait! I love you—I take it all back! Only come away!"

He pressed her closer to his heart, speechless and trembling, and even in the terror of her first earthquake she knew that he trembled from love, not fear.

The bricks in the chimney gritted together ominously, and the cross-eyed Japanese warrior in the cor-

ner came over on the floor with a bang.

Arm in arm the lovers started for the door, but as they reached it the earthquake stopped, only a sort of sick, nauseating aftermath of motion remaining. Nothing was broken but a few trinkets, the warrior's nose and Miss Herndon's resolve. And long after the last tingling fibre of sensation had quitted the land and was running along the bottom of the Pacific, she was still explaining, tenderly, that she had not been frightened for herself at all, only for him.



COMPENSATION

WHAT boots the world's brief gratitude—
Are fame and wealth worth wooing?
Lord, let me do a little good
For the sweet sake of doing.

What cares the morning star for praise,
The violet in the vale?
Content unheard through all its days
Carols the nightingale.

But One's reward supreme shall be,
By Him we stand or fall;
What heed, so long as He shall see
And understand it all?

C. E. BARNES.



THE CARE OF INFANTS

"SHE makes herself the slave of her baby."
"Yes?"

"Yes; she won't permit anybody else to weigh him, and the result is she can't be away from home more than two hours at a time."



THOUGHT IT PROBABLE

MISS WITHERS—He asked me to marry him last night.
THE FRIEND—And did you?

THE WEAPON OF A WOMAN

By Douglas St. George Huntington

AS Middleton crossed the doorway the porter came forward to say two letters and a parcel had just been taken up to his rooms. He passed on and mounted the stair. In his great *atelier* he sat down and listlessly unwrapped a cane of green-gray hue, having for a head a cross-piece of silver worked in some barbaric fashion. One of his letters was from a friend in Africa, telling him the cane was cut from the hide of a rhinoceros and that the silver had been worked in Zanzibar.

The artist was pleased with the thing; it was handsome; and as he surveyed it the obvious idea of its utility as a weapon occurred to him. The simple thought brought a smile. In a life divided between painting and pleasure, had one ever recourse to arms? He broke open the other letter. At first he could scarcely make out its purport, though it soon became plain enough.

SIR: A person who knows you (thoroughly) believes it a duty to warn you that if your dishonorable attentions in a certain quarter do not immediately cease measures will be taken to put a stop to them. This letter, though anonymous, is written with the best intentions, since its object is to protect a helpless and friendless girl whose poor, silly head has been turned by your reputation as *un homme à bonnes fortunes*—a reputation for which there is no accounting, since I am assured your conquests have been, though rare, anything but choice. May the much-too-celebrated Randolph Middleton go no further on his reputation, now that an easy victory presents itself, than he did in achieving it.

To this a postscript was added with a flourish:

You have painted yourself blacker than you are; yet you deplore the blackness of the old landscape painters.

The confused afterthought had evidently been overvalued.

Suddenly brought to front this scurrility, Middleton felt for a moment like one struck in the dark. However, on consideration he did not feel grievously wounded; one is not cast to earth by such attacks. He was no boaster and had been singularly discreet; if he passed for a *conquérant*, it was the women who had given him the name. The injuries to himself might easily be eliminated; what dismayed him was the reference to Miss Eversfield. She was a Virginian, like himself, and had lived in Paris about a year now with Mrs. Walton, who was cousin to them both. Miss Eversfield studied French that she might teach it, and painting with a faint hope of doing well in it; being poor, she knew of no other way to live than to teach or paint. Multitudes paint, and many women; but this one said to herself, if art failed her, French should not; and in that language she had made commendable progress. Of painting girls, whose art he had so often found a pretext for another pursuit, Middleton disapproved; but Miss Eversfield was a lady. There was a steadfast air about her, charming like music, and at times she was so gracefully glad. Her eyes and her smooth brown hair delighted him, and even her simple, neat dresses. Mrs. Walton took good care of her, and she saw, besides Mrs. Walton, a few old ladies; him only when he came to review her work. He had gone on correcting her sketches honestly enough, yet to

have criticised them at all was an encouragement; he wished he had given her none.

The clock struck and he looked up—half-past seven. He had a dinner at eight; disinclined to society, he must dress and go out. He rose and tossed the letter into a box. Such writing he had seen before, often, but not recently. He cast a comfortable look on his cane; it lay there, serviceable, savage, frank as a sword. A feminine mind had conceived the letter, Middleton was sure; whether a woman's or not he could not determine; a woman's, he feared. Chivalry could not then protect Miss Eversfield; it was rather the buckler nowadays of wicked women.

In a cab on his way up the Champs Élysées he pondered his life in Paris. For a time it had been a merry one, lived for art and not vainly. Then he had strayed—success not pointing aright—into the lethal atmosphere of society. There his success had grown—his confidence in himself, too; but he had made no glorious advance. An amazing cleverness had been acquired, certainly; there were moments when, contrite, he would turn a picture to the wall. No longer was he the poet who evoked a fairy wood at sundown, nor the enchanter who called up splendid visions of the sea.

He came out of his musings into the electric fulgency of a drawing-room, and was offered a little envelope that contained the name of Mrs. Lynne. He had once known her very well; she was a widow, and a pretty one. Mrs. Lynne sat in a corner talking with a man when Middleton was announced, and looked toward the door at his name. He soon moved to where she sat and carelessly addressed her.

"I feared to be the last."

"What, the first of painters?"

"You are pleased to be satirical. I am going to take you in to dinner, so you had better treat me well."

"I suppose you will treat me to all your ideas on women."

"Is that my habit?"

"I know you have a very low opin-

ion of women, of which you are very proud."

"Mrs. Lynne should raise it."

"I sha'n't try. It is very old, your opinion, and not particularly yours."

"So common," Middleton admitted, with a weary smile, "there's no holding me responsible for it."

The tardy guest arrived, and they went in to dinner. The artist looked round the table, at the excessive pearls and diamonds, at the time-wasting, costly frocks, failures mostly; at the wan women in them. It seemed odd there should be so little taste and beauty in a world living wholly for appearances. The lady beside him, however, was pretty enough; an extreme consciousness of the fact had at one time made havoc of his skeptic mind. For three years his constant fancy had endowed her with a flowering intelligence and a generous sympathy—qualities she lacked. They were on the verge of marriage, when suddenly, mercilessly, without shame, she revealed to him her dwarfish soul. In an outburst of anger and jealousy she poured forth upon him the hoard of her inexplicable resentments. All through the fair days of their friendship she had been amassing them. She had put a meaning on the meaningless; charged a glance with an intention; entailed motives on a gesture. The gist of it all was that in the irrevocability of marriage to him she must forever renounce chances of marrying other men. She could name one of the darksome throng—an irresolute marquis. Each possessed some precious thing Middleton had not; yet she was ready to give herself to him—if only he would give up his opinions, beliefs, hopes—all that was his—and try to feel, overwhelmingly, the sacrifice she made him. The man was unequal to the effort, now that she had deprived herself of his illusions, and sat miserably silent. Supposing him grieved merely at her violence—regretting that bitterly, no doubt—an avowal, desperate, passionate, escaped her: "Don't you know there

are moments when a woman would thank a man if he slapped her?" Well, Middleton had not slapped her, but the phrase had affected his attitude toward women. Afterward, he chanced to read in a medical study that a fierce hostility to another's conception of life is the chief characteristic of the hysteric female. The information, however, was cheerless; nor did that crisis, when he recalled it, appear less terrible. He could look on her now as on anything beautiful, and felt for her no unkindness; to find her still rancorous surprised him. He must straightway speak to her, and not sit there taciturn. But she spoke first.

"Haven't you punished me enough, Mr. Middleton?"

"I don't know how much you have done; the punishment should equal the offense." She was not looking at him, but across the table. He watched her a moment. She did not speak, and he idly offered her a supplement: "I will be just; but you shall not be spared."

Mrs. Lynne laughed.

"I was very rude to you," she said.

"Frank; frankness is a deal better than furtive hostility. Of course, I have not an idea why you should treat me ill."

"Of course not." Mrs. Lynne gave him a somewhat defiant glance. Middleton did not know what it meant, but presumed a chimera hovered over her fearful mind.

"You used to be guided by the sublime precepts of La Rochefoucauld; are you still?"

"It would have been much better for me if I had been guided by them." The lady spoke ruefully. On a sudden she faced him squarely. "Why did you ask me that?" she said.

"You quoted to me once," replied Middleton, with great tranquillity, "*'Au fond de toute amitié il y a de la haine.'*"

"And you," exclaimed Mrs. Lynne, "held it was not true."

"Not always true. Yes, I rose against it; I see it may be true. La Rochefoucauld has been noxiously

suggestive ere now. Do you know why you dislike me?" Mrs. Lynne was silent. "I can seek a reason only in your book of maxims. Misunderstandings break up many friendships; and then there are disappointments—one may lose one's faith. What we call friendship is often chance association. It's a longer way from love to hate than you think, Mrs. Lynne. A woman's imagination, however, may take her far."

"A woman's instinct is unerring," Mrs. Lynne asserted.

"So women say, and so some men like to believe. After all, it may be true of dairymaids."

"You are doubtless familiar with them," said she, capriciously.

Their conversation was interrupted; Mrs. Derwent wished to know if he had ever lost anything and gone for it to the Prefecture of Police. He had—an umbrella left in a cab.

"And did you get it back?"

"Yes, I got it back."

"Lately?"

"Last week."

"Then you think I can recover my parasol?"

"If you can find it."

"Don't be provoking."

"They will want a clue; can you give them one?"

"Well, it must have been stolen from my carriage in the Rue de la Paix. Just think! to have a thing stolen there, in one of the smartest streets in Paris!"

"A thief, no doubt, should steal in the thieves' quarter—wherever that may be."

"You are becoming lively. At the beginning of the dinner you sat as solemn as a judge. I began to think you were ill."

"Rather an unpleasant thing happened to me to-day. I don't know why I shouldn't tell you about it. I received an anonymous letter."

"Not really? But you are celebrated enough to receive heaps of anonymous letters."

"I wish I could think so."

"Your letter was probably written

by some envious person you've never spoken to."

"Some bounder," Middleton interjected; but less and less he thought so. There is a loyalty to even chance association, and he had been unwilling to regard his companions as searchable.

"The letter is in bad French, I suppose."

"Why do you suppose that?"

"Oh, you need not think yourself privileged!"

"No, my letter is in ready-made English, the best of disguises, and may have been written by any vulgar, jealous person. The only indicative thing is the handwriting."

"And that," Mrs. Derwent remarked, "is the most deceptive thing in the world. Think of the trial we have read about in the newspapers!"

"Ah, but that was political! Great passions were excited, great interests at stake. This is different. I recognize a peculiar hand, but I suspect no one. You see, I've a good visual memory. One may remember a face and not be able to attach a name to it."

"Then you do not think it was written by a bounder," the lady observed. Middleton smiled. "I mean," she hastily amended the phrase, "by an outsider."

"I fear by a rank insider."

"Perhaps a woman," Mrs. Derwent hinted.

"Scarcely a lady," replied Middleton.

"I dare say a woman wrote it." Such a possibility Mrs. Derwent readily admitted, yet she asked: "Are you judging by the writing, now?"

"No, by the sentiments."

"It is all very dreadful," was Mrs. Derwent's comment; and for a while both were silent. From time to time Middleton had taken note of Mrs. Lynne in converse with the Comte de Viroflay, the only Frenchman present. Viroflay had been doing his worst to shock her, but with no more apparent success that was evinced by a nervous laugh. Their conversation evidently flagged.

Mrs. Derwent declared that people who wrote anonymous letters should be hunted down and punished; reflection had made her fully alive to the iniquity of such writing. Mrs. Lynne turned from Viroflay and leaned forward as if to smell the roses before her.

"Surely," Middleton assented; "but society nowadays is so *bourgeois* that we defend only our pockets and our lives."

"You ought to seek out the author of that letter," Mrs. Derwent advised; "you have the law on your side."

To the artist there seemed an affectation in Mrs. Lynne's attitude, a constraint; she still leaned forward, fascinated by the flowers.

"Yes, the law is on my side." As he looked at her white shoulders he could fancy they turned pink.

"By the bye, come dine with us Thursday, will you? We will go to the opera afterward; 'Romeo and Juliet,' I think it is. And do as I advise you. You talk to John about it; he believes in standing up for one's self."

The painter smiled. He would go with pleasure.

"I say, Middleton," put in the gentleman on Mrs. Derwent's right, "haven't I a vague claim? I should like to insert a word edgewise, if you don't very much object."

"You poor, dear man!" the lady cried; "we have been discussing something so interesting."

"I knew it was either that or Middleton," said the gentleman, to whom she then began to talk at a great rate.

Mrs. Lynne turned shortly upon her former friend, but spoke without asperity: "Whom are you going to take the law of? Do tell me; it will give you something to say to me."

"A person," replied Middleton, deliberately, "who has sent me an anonymous letter."

"I thought one tore up unsigned letters and threw them away?"

"But when one has recognized the handwriting?"

She hesitated a moment. "Are you quite sure?"

"Quite."

With fishy eyes she looked at him. "What are you going to do?" she asked.

"Oh," said he, "I suppose there is but one thing to do—hand the matter over to the Prefect of Police." She blanched before the Prefect. Then solemnly the question came: "Why did you write it?" Looking at her, Middleton found her blighted and pitiable.

"Drink a little champagne." She put forth an effete hand, and lifting the glass, spilled a drop. She drank, and looked round the table with a curiously grave face. A moment, and she questioned him: "Are you going to hunt me down?"

He did not answer.

"You are a gentleman, Mr. Middleton."

"You do well," he replied, "to count on that." Timidly she glanced at him. "You need fear no longer," he said.

"Thank you," she murmured.

"Your jibes at me are easily forgiven. Why you slandered——"

"She never saw it."

"No, she never saw it; unless you wrote her another."

"Believe me, I never posted it." Mrs. Lynne blurted out the words. After a pause she spoke again: "You never loved me." Middleton gave her a blunt look.

"Then," he answered, gravely, "I shall never hate you."

"Does she love you?" asked Mrs. Lynne.

Middleton colored. "I have no reason in the world for thinking so. In fact, I'm quite sure she does not." With a hapless smile he went on: "To tell you the plain, flat truth, and pocket my own pride, I think she regards me as rather an old person. And she is right; I am too world-weary for her."

"She will marry you fast enough," said Mrs. Lynne, rising with the others; and the man knew she had not understood, and never would understand. No sense of her baseness had touched her, but she was rid of the penal fear. Pallid, erect, she moved from the room, on her lips a lamentable smile.

"It's a woman's world," thought Middleton, "but a hard one for honest women. I wonder if things are worse in Zanzibar."



FATE

"I CARE not," said a rose, "what be my fate,
If only on love's bosom soft I lie;
Illicit love, or lawful with its mate,
It matters not, so there I fade and die."

A violet sighed, "I only care to own
A fate as lowly as my modest head,
Sweet memories bring to one who is alone,
Or soothe and cheer a sick child's weary bed."

O Fate, thou mystery! The rose was hid
Within the shadow of a coffin lid;
And the pure violet, in wild unrest,
Withered and shriveled on a wanton's breast.

EDITH SESSIONS TUPPER.

RENUNCIATION

THE curé's little niece is bright
 As the Madonna's candles are
 At Easter mass, when, all alight,
 Each burns like some triumphant star.

Can I, unholy, enter where
 The twilight of her niche they gem?
 Nay, little maid, I should not dare
 Even to lift my eyes to them.

The curé's little niece is white
 As the Madonna's lilies show,
 Laid on her altar-steps at night—
 Pure miracles of bloom and snow.

Can I, unholy, enter there
 To lay rude hands on bud and stem?
 Nay, little maid, I should not dare
 Even to bring my tears to them.

JOHN WINWOOD.



WHEN CHARM MEETS CHARM

MR. JACKSON—I done hab my rabbit's foot erlong, but she give me de mahble heaht, jes' same!

MR. JOHNSON—Mebbe she done hab her rabbit's foot erlong, too!



A DISTINCTION

JAY GREEN—That feller over there is the funny man of your show, ain't he?

LEADING MAN—No; he is the comedian.



QUITE NATURAL

WILLIS—Did Colonel Soak die a natural death?

WALLACE—Yes, paralyzed.

THE CROWN OF EASTPHALIA

By Clinton Ross

WE met him somewhere under the name Dean—Christopher Dean. He was a groom. Someone knew a real Roman prince who was a real groom, and the whisper came, supported by distinction in Christopher's appearance, that he was a prince *incognito*.

Peggy declared he was "interesting," "distinguished," "clever," "abominable," "very nice," "handsome" and "horrid." My mother had it that Peggy's fancies were too much taken—as if Peggy were your ordinary fanciful girl! Really, I, her brother, had never discovered so much as a grain of sentiment about her; and I should have known. She was not one of those persons who would make out of Christopher a prince, certainly not an ordinary prince—we knew several princes who were something less than an American or an English gentleman—nor yet the prince of the fairy tale, with herself a Cinderella. Peggy was no more a Cinderella than she was a Salvation lass. But my mother insisted that she should be guarded; for the apparition of thieves eagerly seeking full pocketbooks haunted Mrs. Fielding, awake or sleeping.

I was not altogether loath to go to Cairo that Winter, for there is the fun of the polo and the season, and we were sure that Mr. Bailier, at Shepherd's, would have our rooms waiting, overlooking the garden where walks the pelican. We had done our Egypt many times; knew Rameses and Seti, the pyramids, the Parisian streets, the English barracks, the Gizeh museum, the wonder of the ancient ruin at the second cataract, the variegated promenade before Shepherd's piazz-

za. Therefore we did not go there for these things, but left them to the tourists from the new places of our garish West.

It was an unusual season—talk of Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, of the appearance of America as an empire, with a word about Asia; talk of the French and of the accentuated evidence of the feeling of cousinship between American and Briton, and of the fearful Boer, who extorted from Mr. Rhodes and his associates the taxation of his republic. Events were brewing; the century was closing; and in Cairo in the Spring of 1899 you read pages of international gossip.

The world was there, too—the world that goes gadding about seeking amusement. You may note that I am a trifle pessimistic, and I should not be surprised if before long you saw me laboring long hours in the offices of the O'Dowd Steel Company, of which I hold 45,000 shares—last quotation, 2.40. The Countess of Welhampton was there, more British than the original—but then you know a wife's country and politics are her husband's. Welhampton was with Kitchener in the Soudan. But there was no reason why Lady Welhampton should not give a ball, and indeed, it was the most famous of the season of 1898-99. And how Peggy shone! Among all those distinguished persons—it was difficult to pick them out from common folk sometimes—my American young lady gave the women odds. "Oh," my dear mother sighed, "if some people in New York could see her now!" But enough were seeing her and following her up, from

poor Freddie Burton and John Forbes, who was down with his yacht, to the Earl of Strathers, a French Marquis, a Russian prince, and a German prince, Carl Edward, blood royal of "a kingdom that John Forbes might sign his cheque for and turn into a country place," said Freddie Burton, in disgust. "Say, Bertie," he went on, "let's throw the thing up, use some sort of pull at Washington and go to the Philippines." I was finding Cairo interesting just then, and I observed gravely that as head of the family I owed something to my mother and sister, the latter being down there for her health. Her illness was a fiction of my mother's, for never in her life had Peggy been more robust than during the Winter at Cairo.

But the warmer days came on, and the gay folk and tourists fled, we with the others, up through the Riviera, lingering at Mentone, with the old experiment of Monte Carlo, then pausing at Paris for the dear shops' sake, and thence up to London for the season under the chaperonage of our friend, the Countess of Welhampton. And here Peggy was again in her element. She would have made no mean queen, I'm sure; and I am equally sure she would have run her own domains, despite councillors, quite according to her own idea.

One morning Peggy and I were out on the Row in its crowded moment, our boy Philip acting as groom. My mother's and Peggy's maid, Maria, and Philip were part of our impedimenta.

"Mamma is not at all well," Peggy was saying, "and that awfully wise Dr. Simpkins says the only thing for her to do is to take the baths at Dreibaden."

"Oh!" I groaned; "I want to go back—I want to dine at the club—I want——"

"You are horribly selfish, Bertie, I've always said," Peggy continued. "Of course we must have an escort. It's only for poor mamma's sake."

"Take some of these chaps that are tagging after you."

"The more reason for our having

an escort," Miss Peggy commented, severely. "It isn't as if we were ordinary people—not that we are not very ordinarily rich. But, oh dear, you know what I mean well enough."

"I dare say I am in for it," I said, gloomily.

"Bertie, Bertie, look!" She was tapping me with the end of her whip.

Coming down the path, a groom lagging behind, was Christopher—not Christopher the groom, but Christopher the gentleman. With him was an extremely pretty woman.

"Jove!" said I, "that's the fellow."

"You are sure?" said Peggy, as if doubting her eyes. Christopher saw us, recognition lay in his eyes, and he bowed; then his lady and he were swept on in the procession.

"He dared to bow!" said Peggy, hotly, and set her horse to a canter.

"The lady," said I, "was extremely pretty."

"Do you think so?" tossing her head.

"I wonder—" I began.

"So do I," said Peggy, petulantly. "He keeps one wondering."

That evening—we went to hear Wyndham—she was unusually gracious to Burton and Forbes, who turned up in our box.

After the play I was in my room when there came a knock, and Peggy entered bearing a great bunch of violets held together by a tiny gold chain.

"Maria just handed me this," she said. "He has dared to send this. Bertie, you must do something to that man."

"Was there a note?"

"No, only the violets," and she went to the open window and tossed flowers and chain far out into the street.

"Insolent!" she said, and without giving me time to answer, rushed out; but the "insolent" was not directed at me this time. Brother-like, I laughed; and then went forth for a rarebit and beer, which, as you will see, I didn't have.

For, as I passed out, a dark, thick-set man stopped me, and said, with an accent:

"Mr. Christopher Dean is awaiting you, sir, in a cab."

"It is quite right, Conrad," came Christopher's voice. "I want you, Mr. Fielding, to drive with me to my hotel. Really, you must, you know; you owe it to me."

There was the old, winning grace in his voice that had charmed me before, and I answered that I would; and then Ponsonby's voice joined in:

"I must present you, Mr. Fielding, to His Highness, the Crown Prince of Eastphalia."

Conrad had opened the brougham door, and I stepped in.

"I suspected something of the sort," I said. And now all was explained.

"The 'Mad Prince,' they call me," said Christopher, easily and with a little laugh; "eh, Ponsonby?"

"With some reason, Your Highness."

"But Christopher Dean, too, Ponsonby. Bear witness for me, since Mr. Fielding suspects."

"Yes," said the attaché; "the Earls of Dalton, extinct with us, have a right to the name Christopher Dean."

"It was an ancestress in the Stuarts' time, Mr. Fielding, the last of the line of the Earls of Dalton, who brought the name Christopher Dean into my family. Then, I am much an Englishman to-day—my mother was the Princess Sophia and I have been a captain in the British army. You force me to talk of myself, for I must explain. We shall be at the Park Lane house presently, and then you will learn more. Ah, Ponsonby, how lucky your leave has been to me! How else should I have explained to the satisfaction of Mr. Fielding, whom I have deceived so grossly?"

I expostulated beamingly, wondering why a crown prince of even a little German kingdom should care to explain to me. Yet I had certain explanations to ask of him. He had dared to make a declaration of love to Peggy. Either as groom or as heir-apparent, his course was equally inexcusable, to my mind. The fact of my being an American, and a rather

powerful one, by the grace of my grandfather, made me feel quite the Prince's equal; while Peggy was certainly anybody's equal. I have none of my mother's worship of rank, though the social Americans of to-day are as snobbish, I declare, as Thackeray's Englishmen.

We stopped in Park Lane. A lackey opened the door, as we went up the steps and were ushered into the suite of rooms occupied by Leopold Wilhelm Carl Christopher, Count of Schartzburg and Crown Prince of Eastphalia. Conrad, the Prince's servant, brought cigars, cigarettes and some whiskey, and then Christopher, with a slight smile and tapping the table with his fingers, began:

"You, too, have a burden forced on you, Mr. Fielding—the burden of property. I have that, as well as you, and some day I may have the burden of sovereignty—God keep that day far away! The thing oppresses me, and has since I was a mere boy. I have tried to be rid of it as best I could. I was educated as a soldier, of course, and with my father's and the Emperor's approval, I have served in the British army. I have had fighting in the Soudan and in Africa. I like a soldier's life well enough, so far as I am concerned. I wanted to see with other eyes than my own—the people's eyes. In Germany I've done my share of slumming, and they call me the 'Mad Prince.' I may be—I may not be," he commented, with the illuminating smile which told that the British family that gave a husband to an Eastphalian princess in Charles the Second's time was Irish.

"Well, to go on: I read in an American magazine not long ago a series of papers called 'The Workers,' in which the writer told of several experiments we had made in the attempt to put himself in the places of laborers. If he, for the sake of mere observation, did this, why shouldn't I? Why wasn't it more my duty to know? I couldn't carry out my experiment in Germany or in England. I could in America. Now, you know, I have disappeared once or

twice, like my uncle, the Archduke, who sailed away with an Austrian singer, never to be heard of again. I took Ned Ponsonby into my confidence, and to America I went as Christopher Dean. And that is the name I bear in England, Mr. Fielding, as you have been told."

He paused, lighted a cigarette, and went on:

"Ned Ponsonby laughed at me and helped me. I was a miner at Scranton, a trainhand on the Erie, a farmhand, and lastly I tried a groom's place. Anyone else might have taken me, Mr. Fielding, but I had the good luck to fall in with you and your acquaintance. You see that when I left I could not well explain." He looked at me quickly as he said this.

"And was the result of the experiment successful, Your——?"

"Mr. Dean, if you please."

"—Mr. Dean."

"No, hardly; yet I learned a great deal. But they always seemed to find out about me—that I was masquerading. I believe they always knew about the man who wrote 'The Workers,' though he does not state so. But, Mr. Fielding, it's this: We have a way in the world, and we must find it. A prince, or a great millionaire, has no easier way than others. I have tried everything. I have scandalized my father and my relatives, who are staid, matter-of-fact folk. My inheritance is not so very great. There are commoners here, and many of your country, who have greater. But if the inheritance reaches me, I propose to prove I was in earnest when I told you that day in Middlewood that I should care to know about the details of any property I might have, and that, as an American, I should go in for politics. My father has looked askance, and at this moment I am under the Emperor's severest displeasure. I am told that with my father the Eastphalian sovereignty may end, and that Prussia chooses to reduce us more to the position of figureheads. Perhaps so; but I shall have properties left—human souls—to

look after. I know what pleasure is, and how little there is. I know what it is to be a soldier of Germany and a soldier of England. I know what it is to be a laborer. Now, may I not be better for this? Ah, Ponsonby, how is it?"

"You are an eccentric and a wise man," said the Englishman.

"And when it's over you may write it, 'Christopher: His Way in the World,' eh, Ponsonby?"

"But you have not known real poverty," Ponsonby cried. "That's the test. None of us has."

I was feeling some shame myself; for what knew I of the properties that made me what I was, of the thousand toilers that made my position possible? But Christopher interrupted my thoughts.

"I want to show you something in the next room," he said. "It's this," he went on, quickly. "I meant what I said to your sister that day. I shall always mean it. I was carried away by my feelings."

"But even if she should care, that would be impossible."

"Yes, I know—I know. And I don't think she can care. She is too sensible a woman to care for that tinsel thing, a title."

"Which, by the nature of etiquette, couldn't be hers."

"It might, or I might ascend, or descend, as they would put it. But that is neither here nor there. I wanted you and I wanted her to understand me."

He said this so impetuously, with such boyish frankness, that I took his hand and pressed it. He was not the man you could resist, and the expression of his face was frankness itself. And yet there was behind it all a certain diplomacy and stubbornness that made him, in the pursuit of his whims, formidable.

"It's almost time," Ponsonby was saying.

"Do you believe in dueling, Mr. Fielding?" Christopher asked, presently. "It's almost obsolete except on the Continent. We are bred to it in the universities."

"There might be an occasion," I remarked.

"Well, I lost my temper. I am sorry about it."

"You are going to trust Mr. Fielding?" Ponsonby began.

"Why not? I like him, and he is to be trusted. Mr. Fielding, I have an affair of the sort on to-night. It's between a cousin and myself. We can settle it in no other way. Oh, Ned, I can see poor Madame Elizabeth entreating me now to call Carl away. I made Carl very angry, and there's nothing else to do. We will take Fielding along."

This unusual character, that created about itself an atmosphere of knight-errantry—this figure out of the past in a tradesman's age—intoxicated me. I can express my sensation in no other way. And to this was added curiosity to see the outcome of the evening. But ever and again the thought returned that the "Mad Prince" was trying to interest me in himself because of Peggy; yet, Peggy or no, I was interested, and I said I would go gladly. At the moment Conrad announced the carriage, and we put on our coats and went out into Park Lane, with the stretch of the Park beyond. The door was shut, Conrad mounted with the driver, and we drew away into the mystery of the London night.

"But you will allow that, as events are, the Prince should not risk his life," I ventured.

"The partition of Eastphalia, the end of us—a little slice for Russia, a big one for Prussia, our owner; a fair one for Austria, which, I fear, will not be Austro-Hungary very long. And between this slicing of Eastphalia there are myself and Frederick, my brother's boy—a jolly boy. My brother was my best friend."

"Yes," said Ponsonby, "there will be a rearrangement of Europe. Last year saw the end of Spain in America; this—well, there is South Africa, and we shall have to strain to keep our colonial prestige. This Boer matter is no small one."

"No, no, a big one. Do you remember how people talked of war

being over—like the feudal ages? And here we are at it, using the sword, or its modern substitutes, with quite as bloodthirsty a spirit as our ancestors."

"Oh, the burden, the burden that will be mine!" the Prince said, wearily. "My father cannot live long—it has worn him out—and I, I defy it to wear me out! As for Eastphalia, small as it is, it shall stand. Do you remember the Great Carl, who occupied Rome and dictated terms to Christendom? We are wedged in there, but we are a different people—an individual people."

"Then," said Ponsonby, "since you talk so reasonably of the responsibilities, at which you generally laugh, you are not taking a risk to-night. Your cousin dislikes you. You come between him and Madame Meister."

"But Madame does not care for him. She laughs at him and is afraid of him. Ah, he is a prince. She appeals to me. So, behold, the old fashion of the duel."

Ponsonby went on:

"You are going to a deserted house. There are people—socialists, politicians—who would kill Your Highness as readily as they would a rabbit, to say nothing of the——"

"Oh," Christopher interrupted. "I am fairly good at the fence, you will allow."

"Yes, I will allow that, but I will remark, too, that it is never profitable to reason with you against——"

"Say my stubbornness."

"I will say it—your stubbornness."

Listening to their talk, I had not noticed where we were going, and probably, lost in the tangle of streets, should not have known. But now we paused before a red brick house in a row of houses with the same window boxes and in every detail precisely alike. Conrad opened the landau door. A man greeted us at the house door with a low salutation, and we passed through some bare rooms to one that was furnished with chairs and a table on which were ink and paper. Here were three men, and

one, his Inverness coat thrown back, showed many orders. I started, for he was Carl Edward, that Eastphalian prince I had met lately in Cairo. He looked in equal surprise at me as Christopher introduced me.

"I have had the pleasure this Winter," Carl Edward was pleased to say.

And then I was presented to the others—Baron Stern, a young, handsome man, and Dr. Gamber.

"Well, Carl, I am sorry that you think I was meddling," Christopher began, lightly. "I grant I may have been, but God knows, an honest man must meddle sometimes, or else turn knave."

Carl Edward was his cousin's opposite—dark where he was fair; certainly a handsome man. His dark eyes showed a difference—not a person to trust, you would say, though certainly an agreeable companion.

"I can understand how so charming a woman as Madame Elizabeth should lead—" Carl Edward began.

But Christopher interrupted, brusquely:

"Oh, have a care! I don't like to lose my temper! I like her, I honor her, and you shall let her alone. Or, rather, you have left it to the issue of the swords whether you will or not. I have your word, and that, Carl, is the word of a Düzallern."

"You have my word."

"Then let's settle it; it will be dawn directly."

"Very well," said Carl Edward.

And the two stripped for the duel.

Swords were brought, and the affair began, making me think of Sheridan's historic duel in the tavern. The two seconds, Ponsonby and Stern, watches open, stood vigilant, and at a nod from Ponsonby the little baron gave the word. In the background were the doctor; Conrad, his eyes alert on his master, and I, who had been so strangely brought into the affairs of these people.

The two men both showed skill; but, while Christopher seemed cool and indifferent, there were malice and enmity in Carl Edward's face. It seemed hours to me, which was, in-

deed, but so many minutes, while the clash of the weapons rang through the deserted house. And then Carl Edward's foil went clattering on the floor, while Christopher's glided into his shoulder. At this Christopher threw down his weapon and rushed to the other.

"I hope, I pray, you are not badly hurt."

"Curse you, let me alone!" the fallen man exclaimed. "It's only a scratch, I think; but you have won."

Stern and the doctor had placed the wounded prince on a chair, and presently the latter declared that the wound would be only a temporary inconvenience. At this Christopher showed his relief, and motioned to Conrad to put the table before Carl Edward.

"It's your left arm, so you can sign your name to the apology to Madame Elizabeth."

Without a word, but with a spiteful glance at Christopher, Carl Edward signed his name to the paper, that lay ready on the table. Ponsonby put it into an envelope, sealed it and handed it to Conrad.

"Gentlemen," said Christopher, slowly, "this is a matter for no ears but our own, I need not tell you; for it were hardly seeming that two princes of blood royal should fight over an actress. I can't blame my cousin for having mistaken her for what she wasn't, since that state too often belongs to women on the stage. But, having mistaken her, it was proper that he should apologize; and that he has done."

Meanwhile Conrad had brought in a tray with wine. The "Mad Prince" set the toast.

"You, too, cousin."

Sullenly Carl Edward took his glass.

"We drink," said Christopher, "to my private career, and to her who is to adorn it."

Something in his manner carried us all away, and it was Carl Edward—though, I believe, out of policy—who raised his glass a second time.

"Gentlemen," he said, "long live Prince Leopold Christopher, and may he preserve to us Eastphalia one and undivided!"

A cheer went up that must have reached the street. And then the lights were turned down, and we hurried out into the thoroughfare, where the early June dawn showed the waiting carriage.

"Oh! we have lost sleep," said the Prince, when we were driving on. "How did you like it, Fielding?—I am dropping the Mr., you see. We Germans must fight now and then. We get it in the universities. Ah, but it wasn't very dignified, Ned, over an actress!"

"It might," said Ponsonby, "interfere with Your Highness being taken seriously in your projects in Eastphalia."

"Yes, likely; but then, this isn't the first of my caprices, and Madame Elizabeth is a good woman. I like a good woman, but more my lady . . . Carl, to be sure, who doesn't like me over-much, might let it leak out. He won't break his word, however. How old Von Mark would like to hear it! When I am not there he turns the King round his finger. It's me he dislikes."

"The King is worn out," said Ponsonby.

Christopher turned serious then as he said, softly:

"Poor old man! Shall I be, too, in my turn?" And then, suddenly, to me: "You know it was the fashion in England once to call the Emperor erratic. Now they begin to find that he is a clever man."

We wound sleepily through the streets, I thinking of the little drama I had seen, where everything had been as if arranged by Madame Elizabeth. Ah, I did not know Madame Elizabeth then, and the "Mad Prince" was quite right about her.

At the Park Lane house the Prince gave me his hand.

"You are going to my own Dreibaden?"

"My mother goes there for the baths."

"You must stay long enough to let me find you there. I thank you. Good-bye, Ned."

And he went lightly up the steps, Conrad at his heels, like a bulldog.

"He seems to me to have dropped out of the centuries," said Ponsonby—"a sort of knight-errant, yet a jester, too; but when you sum it up, a good fellow."

"Yes, a good fellow," I said, as I left him at his lodging.

I slept till noon, to be awakened by Philip, who assured me that he was sorry, but my mother and Peggy were fearful we should lose the train. Looking over my mail, I saw that I must lose it, even if they didn't, for there were letters from my bankers that would necessitate cabling and a week's attention. For the hawk, Duty, had swooped down on me. My mother, who was anxious about herself, said that she and Peggy, with the maid and Philip, would go on, and I could follow; so I bundled them off.

On the way to Victoria street Peggy and I followed in a hansom, my mother, having declared Maria must administer medicines, leading in a four-wheeler, with the servants. This may sound rather undutiful, but we were accustomed to these attacks of my mother's, and not to have her particular way made her miserable.

"You were evidently out all night," Peggy commented.

"Yes," I said, "with Christopher."

"With Christopher?"

"Yes; but he is not altogether Christopher."

"I know that. He is the Crown Prince of Eastphalia."

"You knew, then?"

"Why, of course. I had it out of Lord Strathers long ago."

"Oh, you did!" I cried.

"But his impudence was just the same. But tell me now, Bertie, tell me!"

Of course, I told her what had happened.

"The lady in the Park yesterday, and Madame Elizabeth—there seems to be more than one woman in his case," she commented.

"But I have told you what he said about you."

"After the way he acted, he was bound to say that," she replied, and added: "Do you understand yet, Bertie?"

Then—not till then—did I see. I had known her always, and yet—I hadn't.

"You mean—you mean——"

"Madame Elizabeth was a masquerade——"

"A masquerade?"

Her laughter mocked me.

"For me, you goose! And—and——" she went on—"there he is!"

He stood by the curb, like one of the Emperor's grenadiers on review, bowing, smiling. Peggy's head went out of the window. The cabby drew up at the curb.

"I knew we should see you—I had

to see you!" she exclaimed. "I wanted to——"

"Not a word—not a word——"

"And you are not hurt?"

"Not in the least."

She breathed hard, and leaned back.

"Tell him."

Christopher bent his long person in another bow.

"You see, she was the Madame Elizabeth—and I ask of you now the distinguished honor of her hand."

"But you can't!" I gasped, at this dramatic episode in the turmoil of Victoria street.

"I can—I will—I have! I am man—not prince. I waive the succession—I waive everything! I gain a crown—a real crown!"

Peggy leaned out of the window.

"You dear Christopher!" she said.



BARBARA

WHEN the green o' the year comes back, my dear,
Comes back to patient hills,
And true to the call of the sun and the rain,
The garden ground grows bright again
With the shining daffodils,

It's little I'll care, though the days grow fair,
And time takes the April track;
For the heart of the Spring is buried deep
In the sunny place where you lie asleep,
Though the green o' the year come back!

ARTHUR KETCHUM.



PLAINLY A MISOGYNIST

HE—Your friend over there must be a woman-hater.

SHE—Why do you think so?

"He says they are all alike."



NEVER EXPOSED HIS KNOWLEDGE

MAUDE—Can Chappie keep a secret?

LENA—It seems so. He says he knows a thing or two.

THE COMPROMISING OF GUENNSIE

By Guy Somerville

THE Gare St. Eustache, at Pouay, though the frontier station, was as French as any other *gare* on the Chemin de Fer de l'Est, from the "Quinquina Dubonnet" signs to the posters announcing that "Americain drinks," including "cherry gobler," "coxtail," etc., could be obtained at Fleury's, Boulevard Poissonière, 62, Paris. A light, misty rain was falling, and as I tramped up and down the platform in front of the customs waiting for my cousin Guennsie to arrive on the Berliner Schnellzug, I turned up the collar of my raglan and sighed discontentedly. For I had never seen my cousin Guennsie, and my being sent to meet her was the work of my good mother, who, instead of coming herself, had contracted with a friend to dine out this night at the Macht-nichtswashof, seven miles away and just across the German line. Wherefore I, Sydney Barr, for my sins, had been sent to meet this strange girl of twenty-three and drive her out to the Château Nimportequel, of which my mother was the mortgagee in possession, and where we were spending a somewhat disconsolate Autumn. And all I knew about Guennsie was that she was my mother's sister's child, of medium height, and with tresses like a raven's wing; that for the last three years she had been done to death in an Austrian convent, and that prior to that time she had resided, and perhaps voted, in Fargo, N. D.

My plan of action was conceived. As the Schnellzug came in I would carefully single out each beautiful, dark girl who looked gentle and kind, and I would politely accost her, say-

ing: "*Pardon*, but is it that this is Guennsie?" If she said, "Sir!!!"—like that—I could then withdraw. If not—there was no other hypothesis—she would be the object of my quest.

Yet not so did these things befall, on the tenth day of the eleventh month, at seven of the afternoon, when the Berliner Schnellzug drew into the Gare St. Eustache at Pouay.

What did happen was this: A beautiful, dark girl, faultlessly clad, sprang gracefully out of the *wagon-lit* and came up the platform, expectant and agile, bearing in every lineament the familiar stamp of the Middle West. Instinctively I reached out to seize her. At the same instant an enormous German officer, with clanking sabre and patent leather top-boots, stepped between us, and said, in idiomatic English:

"Well! Is this Gwen?"

I reeled suddenly into the poster for Quinquina Dubonnet.

"Rather!" said the young lady from the Middle West.

Then the brute kissed her—there, on the public platform of the Gare St. Eustache. What could I do? The man was a Hercules, and I—I am moulded like Mercury, though not so quick by nature.

"There's the trap I brought," said he, indicating a light, unsubstantial surrey in charge of a man in livery. "I am sorry, but it is not raining much. Come, heart's love, and I will see you through the *douane*."

They walked away to the customs, my cousin leaning on the brute's arm. In a flash the whole diabolical plot dawned on me. My cousin was supposed to be betrothed to Siegfried von

Glahn, and his family, who were very powerfully connected, opposed the match. The head of that family was Gottesreich, Siegfried's older brother—a man whom I had never seen, but who, from his pictures, must have been remarkably like the gentleman now walking down the platform with my unsuspecting and helpless cousin. To have ascertained that my cousin was coming on that train; to meet her under false pretenses, and to compromise her so hopelessly that Siegfried would break it off—all this was so in keeping with von Glahn traditions that I no longer had any doubt. The Barr blood boiled within me.

"I think not," I muttered. "He is bigger, but I think not."

And with sudden decision I walked over to where the liveried coachman sat, almost asleep, on the forward seat of the surrey.

I gripped the dashboard and vaulted lightly into the seat beside him. The thing was certain now. The monogram "v. G." was on his buttons.

"Do I look," said I, affably, "like a gentleman who steals surreys?"

He admitted that I did not look as if that particular kind of theft was my forte.

"I have here," I said, persuasively, "a Bank of France note for two hundred francs. Get down and walk, and let me drive them home, and you shall have it for a *pourboire*."

The man chuckled.

"*Potztausend!*" said the man.

"That's it," said I, encouragingly.

"If I lose my place—" said he.

"No matter, I'll get you another. And anyway, this'll do for a book-mark."

"I was going on Monday, anyway," he went on, in uncertain wise. "Herr Gott! if I thought you meant no harm!"

I assured him that my intentions were of the best. He clutched the banknote with sudden decision. I thrust out my hand and almost threw him from the trap.

"Better take my hat," he said, kindly. "And button up your raglan; it is the same color as mine.

Yes, and keep your face turned from the station lights. So, so! He will never notice, will the Herr Gottesreich. He never looks at me."

"Be off with you!" I said, for the Herr Gottesreich was coming from the *douane*.

He stumbled clumsily away into the darkness of the neighboring Rue 20^{ME} Septembre.

Gottesreich approached and laid his heavy hand on the carriage lamp. Guennsie, the unsuspecting, followed closely. Of course, I could have made a scene, but I smiled as I thought that the game was now in my own hands. Machiavelli would have done it my way. Machiavelli detested scenes.

They mounted into the surrey and settled themselves on the back seat. I slammed the front seat down and sat on it, motionless.

"Home," said Gottesreich, from his boot-tops.

I set my teeth. This was precisely what I had supposed. In due course of time I would see that the day of reckoning should be up to Gottesreich. "Home"—fortunately I knew the direction—was some four miles out in the country. There would be lonesome places enow before we reached it. I let the horse—a single, massive bay—choose his own gait.

"It's the most extraordinary thing," I heard Guenn say behind me, "how you ever found out I was coming on that train."

"Not extraordinary," he said, and the surrey shook so that I knew he had essayed a bow, "not extraordinary, when you consider how much I love you."

Thank God that at this moment the bay stumbled and almost fell. Otherwise I should have slain Gottesreich.

"Is everyone well at home?" said Guennsie.

"All well," said he, briefly.

"Siegfried?"

"Thinks of nothing but his approaching marriage."

For a moment I had forgotten Siegfried.

"Poor Siegfried!" she said, softly.

"Yes," said he; "I don't think he's going to be very happy."

I thought Guennsie was going to resent this. But she merely said:

"You're very happy, aren't you?"

"Just at present writing," said he.

It was too much. I looked at the surrounding landscape. We were on a lonely stretch of road lined with poplars. Not a house to be seen for nearly a mile; not another traveler; hardly a light. Deliberately I let the whip fall back over my shoulder and, accidentally, sent Gottesreich's hat spinning into the road.

"Imbecile!" roared Gottesreich. "Get out and pick it up. *Tausend Teufel!* Give me the lines."

As he spoke he rose and stepped over the back of the front seat, as I knew he would do. I threw myself against him with my whole force, and without a second's warning. Big man as he was, he fell clumsily over the front wheel and rolled over and over himself in the soft, black mud at the side of the road. At the same instant, guided by me, the bay sprang into a long, stretching gallop.

Guennsie screamed.

"Guennsie," I said, over my shoulder.

"How dare you!" said she.

"I don't," said I, truthfully.

"You are abducting me!" she said.

"Quite the contrary," said I; "I am preventing your abduction."

"Who are you?" she said, fearfully, gripping the side of the trap.

"I'm your cousin Sydney," I said, with much *éclat*.

A light broke over Guennsie.

"You are Sydney?" she said, slowly.

"Sydney Barr—I see. And you are—you are saving me?"

It is delightful to be understood.

"Just so," I said, enthusiastically.

"Come on the front seat and I'll tell you."

"Thank you," said Guennsie, hastily. "I can hear nicely from here."

I held back the seat for her to pass. Gottesreich was a mere speck in the blackness far behind, and I let the bay walk.

"Come," I said, with an air of

authority. "It is your duty. I am your cousin, and—er—your natural protector."

"I had forgotten," she said, demurely, yet with a strange light in her eyes.

I placed my left arm comfortably around my cousin's waist, the while I guided the bay with the right. Suddenly she burst into ringing, uncontrollable laughter.

"It was awfully funny!" she gasped. "That man—who was he, if you are Sydney? And *did* you see him roll?" and she laughed again.

"That man," said I, in my most impressive tone, "is your mortal enemy and that of all our house. He is Gottesreich von Glahn."

"Ah, yes," said she, still rippling. "Gottesreich von Glahn. Oh, Lord, *how* he rolled! He will kill you some day."

I felt an uncomfortable sensation for a moment.

"Never, while I live," I said, feebly. "But I think we may as well go faster."

"Could you?" said she, demurely.

I became conscious that my cousin Guennsie was an extraordinary woman. She was also deliciously like a fresh rose. I measured the distance. Should I? I shouldn't. I did.

"You mustn't," she protested.

"It's a duty," I said, solemnly.

"You're my cousin," she echoed, with sarcasm. "But please remember—Siegfried."

"Of course," I said, disconsolately. "There is Siegfried. I had forgotten him for a moment."

"Don't do it again," said she, temptingly.

I rebelled at this.

"After all," said I, "you're my cousin. You'll be that, you know, even after you——"

"Yes," said she, hurriedly. "But then it won't any longer be a duty——"

"No trouble, I assure you——"

"Oh!"

I really had become quite reckless as to Siegfried von Glahn.

"If you do that again," said she, "I shall really have to scream."

"Why didn't you scream?"

"After all, it is still a duty," she said, seemingly resigned.

"Do you really love Siegfried?" I whispered, confidentially.

She whispered confidentially back:

"Not the least little bit."

"I'll bet," said I, "he's not a bit nicer than Gottesreich."

"I think I like Gottesreich better," said she, mirthful.

I was shocked.

"Not that," said I. "Anything but that. Gottesreich is a brute. And besides, think of the way he rolls!"

Once more Guennsie was convulsed at the reminiscence. But at that instant she straightened up. We were opposite the beginning of the avenue of poplars that led off, at right angles, to the seat of the von Glahns.

"Get out a moment," said Guennsie, "and look at his off hind foot."

I handed her the lines and jumped. There was nothing the matter with his off hind foot.

"I think that'll be about all," said Guennsie.

A sudden spasm of fear came to me.

"What do you mean?" said I.

She bent down over me graciously, her plumes nodding. Long since the

rain had ceased, and the full moon was shining.

"I haven't been quite fair to you, Sydney," she said, gravely. "I'm not your cousin. I'm another Guennsie."

My blood ran cold.

"Yes," she said, positively.

I spoke my first thought.

"Then," said I, dogmatically, "it will not be necessary for you to marry Siegfried."

"No," she answered, smiling.

"And Gottesreich? What are you to him? His cousin?"

Again the silvery laugh.

"I'm his wife, Sydney. His wife—married a year. Oh, Lord, oh, Lord, *did* you ever see anyone roll—?"

I bolted furiously down the road in the direction of the Château Nimporette. But she called after me.

"Sydney!"

I stopped, for the voice had a caressing note.

"Sydney!"

"Yes—Guennsie."

"I've—I've enjoyed—ever so much—being your cousin *pro tem.*," she said. "And I don't in the least mind about—about what you did to Gottesreich."

"Damn Gottesreich!" said I.



THE DÉBUTANTE

O LORD, most Holy One above! I pray
That Thou wilt guard her sacred woman's soul,
And keep it pure and lovely as the whole
Of her sweet virgin being is this day.
Lord, guard her soul! And sanctified as they
Whose angel anthems through Thy heaven roll,
Grant her fair youth the crown and aureole
Of womanhood that cannot go astray.

Lord, guard her soul! Lord, guide her woman's heart!
And keep it sinless as the moment when,
By Thy strange magic of omnipotent art,
Life woke in her—for aye as pure as then.
Let peace and love and happiness be her part.
Lord, answer Thou my prayer for her. Amen!

H. J. SMITH.

THE DARK MAN AT THE FEAST

By Francis M. Livingston

SCENE—A banquet-room. The table is set with costly plate and profusely decorated with flowers. The guests number about a score. At the head sits the Host, a handsome man of the world, aged about forty. Opposite him is his wife, a beautiful woman superbly gowned. From time to time she glances at her husband with smiling but anxious eyes. The scene is lighted only by the shaded candles on the table, the faces of the company being visible through a soft, roseate glow. Behind the chair of the Host stands a dark, heavy figure that leans on his shoulder and whispers frequently in his ear. The others appear not to see this sombre form. Someone has just proposed a toast, and all are laughing and talking merrily.

THE WOMAN WITH THE EMERALDS

It is time for a song—won't you sing for us, Mr. Henleigh? Why do you never sing any more?

The Dark Man in the shadow leans more heavily on the shoulder of the Host.

THE DARK MAN

Tell them why you never sing any more.

THE WOMAN WITH THE EMERALDS (*aside to her companion on her right*)

You would never believe how gay and jolly he was five years ago—like a boy. Now he is so quiet and dignified. His business cares have changed him greatly. He is a very handsome man, do you not think so?

THE DARK MAN

Do you see her whispering to her neighbor? It is about you.

THE HOST (*lifting his glass and smiling at The Woman with the Emeralds*)

Since you request it, Mrs. Deland.

He sings in a pleasant baritone voice a verse of "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes." The guests applaud.

THE HOST'S WIFE (*looking at her husband affectionately*)

Brava, Adelaide! That is more than I have been able to effect.

A GUEST

No one I know gives such dinners as Henleigh. His wines are exquisite—everything in such perfect taste.

THE GUEST'S NEIGHBOR

Perfect! . . . What is the name of the bank of which our host is president?

THE GUEST

He is not the president; I don't know just what his position is—a very confidential one; the power behind the throne, I believe. His salary is an enormous one.

THE DARK MAN

Can you hear what they are saying? One asked about the bank—the other said "enormous" something.

THE WOMAN IN BLUE

No; I shall not cross till June. Mrs. Henleigh, are you not going over this Summer?

THE HOST'S WIFE (*a shade passing across her face*)

Not without my husband.

THE DARK MAN

She will never go, then—never.

THE WOMAN IN BLUE

Oh, that horrid business! Mr. Henleigh, I believe business is as absorbing a passion with some men as music is with others, or horse-racing, or— or gambling.

THE DARK MAN

Ha, ha, ha! that was a clever guess! Was it a guess only? (*The doorbell rings sharply. The Host starts slightly.*) That is for you. They are coming now. It will be embarrassing, will it not, in the presence of all your guests? You think that man will never get to the door—there, he has opened it. Listen with all your ears. Are there voices in the hall? . . . That woman on your right is speaking to you; you must answer her—say anything.

The Host bows, smiling, to the woman who has addressed him. His eyes return to the door as it opens. A servant enters with a letter on a salver.

THE HOST'S WIFE (*after breaking the seal of the letter*)

Mr. and Mrs. Ashmead's regrets. "Unavoidable; so sorry." I am glad we did not wait longer for them.

THE DARK MAN

You gave such a sigh of relief then that two or three looked around in surprise. Why will you betray yourself like that? Lay down that fork; your hand is trembling.

A guest speaks. Laughter and applause follow, and all stand up with glasses raised. The Host rises with the others.

THE HOST'S WIFE (*laughing*)

Sit still, Arthur; don't you understand? The toast is to you.

All drink. The Host now rises again, to respond. He speaks deliberately and gracefully. He is frequently interrupted by laughter, and a woman throws a rose to him. The Dark Man behind his chair stands with him, clasping his shoulders and leaning on him heavily. While the Host is speaking, the Dark Man buzzes in his ear.

THE DARK MAN

It was not then, but the time will come. To-morrow, maybe, or next week, or next month. It will not be next year—that would be too long—too long! You can never for a moment forget that it is coming—coming—coming!

A WOMAN GUEST

Bravo! That is quite the most charming little speech I ever heard.

The company grows more quiet.

THE DARK MAN

The woman in the blue dress and the man next her are talking of the things that worry and depress them—the cold, the wind, the fear of old age, of death, even. Are such things really troubles—those gnat stings? These people do not know the meaning of the word trouble. They have never known me.

THE WOMAN IN BLUE (*looking up and catching the Host's eye*)

Ah, but insomnia! there is nothing so distressing. Do you know what it is, Mr. Henleigh?

THE DARK MAN

Do you know what insomnia is? Tell her of the long, horrible nights through which I sit on your chest and repeat one word over and over until you are nearly mad; of the groans you must stifle, of your crawling to the window to look for the first gleam of day—the day you pray for and yet dread!

THE HOST

I have had occasional wakeful nights, but not of late.

THE DARK MAN

She knows you are lying. She sees the circles under your eyes. There was meaning in that question.

THE WOMAN WITH THE EMERALDS (*leaning toward the Host*)

Please talk to me a moment now. I want to know if this costume ball is to be a masque. I hate masques—they're so hot. . . . Did I ever

tell you about that one at the Granges'?

THE DARK MAN

I hear wheels outside, and a carriage stops. No one can be leaving at this hour.

THE WOMAN WITH THE EMERALDS

George went as an Indian Prince. He dressed at his club, and we met on the floor. Of all the absurd disguises! He was a regular figure of fun!

The doorbell rings.

THE DARK MAN

You did not start that time. You are actually gaining in self-control.

THE WOMAN WITH THE EMERALDS

It wouldn't have been so funny if he had not tried to dance. Of course, I knew him instantly then. Someone told him to ask me. He had no idea who I was, although I wore the sun-burst he had given me a month before.

THE DARK MAN

There are voices in the hall. A man's voice asks for you. You know what that means.

THE WOMAN WITH THE EMERALDS

You remember how George dances. Every other minute he would step on my feet and say, "Beg pardon, madam," "So sorry, madam." At last I could stand it no longer—I was suffocating with laughter—

The door opens. A servant enters and approaches the Host.

THE DARK MAN

This time there can be no mistake.

The servant whispers to the Host, who rises.

THE HOST

Will you pardon me a few moments, my friends?—a message of importance.

THE DARK MAN

"A message of importance"—the last message. *(As the Host moves toward the door the Dark Man fol-*

lows closely, but does not now cling to him.) Look around this room for the last time—your eyes will never again behold it.

Outside the door, in the hallway, a man is standing.

THE HOST (*cheerily*)

Well, Johnson, what brings you up here to-night?

THE MESSENGER

I'm sorry to interrupt you, Mr. Henleigh, but the president wishes you come to his house at once.

THE HOST

Did he—did the president say nothing else?

THE DARK MAN

Is anything else needed?

THE MESSENGER

No, sir, except that you were to let nothing delay you.

THE HOST

There is someone out there with you. Who is it, Johnson?

THE DARK MAN

You ask that? Do you not see the man stands in the shadow? If he should open his coat you would see a shield.

THE MESSENGER (*with embarrassment*)

A stranger to me, sir; he comes from the president.

THE HOST'S WIFE (*who has followed into the hallway*)

What is it, Arthur? Oh, Arthur, you are not going away!

THE HOST (*tenderly*)

I must, my dear wife—but for a little while only. Return to our guests. Say nothing; I shall soon be back.

THE DARK MAN (*shrieking exultingly*)

Liar! you will never come back! This is the moment I have waited for, longed for, for years—cheat, defaulter, embezzler! Take her in your arms—she is struggling against her tears—kiss her; it is for the last time before the bars close on you, thief, thief, thief!

THE HOST (*calmly*)

There, dear, you must run back now. Don't sit up for me.

He goes with her to the end of the passage. As he turns again, the Dark Man flings himself on him.

THE DARK MAN

Now you are all mine!

The Host seizes the Dark Man by the throat, and after a short, violent

struggle hurls him to the floor, where he lies motionless.

THE HOST

Wretch! demon! vampire!—at last your voice is stilled! Now I may stand erect—now I breathe freely—it is the happiest moment of the past five years, and to-night I shall sleep, for I am free of you forever. (*He goes to the door and opens it.*) Now, Johnson, I am ready.



TRANSITION

I AM thy Pleasure. See, my face is fair—
With silken strands of joy I twine thee round;
Life has enough of stress—forget with me!
Wilt thou not stay? Then go—thou art not bound.

I am thy Pastime. Let me be to thee
A daily refuge from the haunting fears
That bind thee, choke thee, fill thy soul with woe;
Seek thou my hand—let me assuage thy tears!

I am thy Habit. Nay, start not; thy will
Is yet supreme, for art thou not a man?
Then draw me close to thee, for life is brief—
A little space to pass as best one can.

I am thy Passion. Thou shalt cling to me
Through all the years to come. The silken cord
Of Pleasure has become a stronger bond,
Not to be cleft nor loosened at a word.

I am thy Master. Thou shalt crush for me
The grapes of truth for wine of sacrifice;
My clanking chains were forged for such as thee—
I am thy Master—yea, I am thy Vice!

KATHERINE LA FARGE NORTON.



WELL HEELED

"YOUR medicine has helped me wonderfully," she wrote to the patent medicine house. "Three weeks ago I could not spank the baby, and now I am able to thrash my husband. God bless you!"

FROM THE BOOK OF LOVE

By Mrs. John Barker

THE LEAGUER OF THE SOUL

PALE passion and red hatred strove with me.
Strange they should battle so for such as he!
They fought till both lay dead one bitter day—
My soul, surprised, awoke to find it free.

AT MIDNIGHT

There is a nagging nettle in my bed,
And wayward Sleep steals by with velvet tread.
To-night I saw a shadow on Love's face
To haunt me for that careless word I said.

LOVE'S PEAKS OF PEACE

Poor lover, writhing in the lonely night,
Your Vale of Hell leads to a solemn height.
Who dares the fire and gains the farther side
Walks with the Sons of God in the Great Light.

VENUS GENETRIX

Dear one, the sweetest of Love's sweet desires,
That woo the soul with fuel for its fires,
Is the dear clasp of tender little hands,
The eyes of little children like their sires.

METEMPSYCHOSIS

You wonder at the force of love in you—
The cosmic flame and power forever new.
It is not strange, for in your vibrant dust
A thousand ancestors their loves renew!

SOLATIO DULCAMARA

The tears of hopeless love are bitter-sweet,
And dearer far its thorns that tear the feet
Than all the flower-strewn ways of lesser loves
That lure the thirsting soul to safe retreat.

THE SMART SET

THE HOLY LIES OF LOVE

Some lies have halos round the brows, and shine
Upon the altar in Love's inner shrine.

I gaze into a weaker woman's eyes
And vow the man she loves was never mine.

A HIDDEN CHORD

A girl gazed long at Love in going by;
I saw the Great Light smoulder in her eye—
The look Love's eyes wear when they gaze at me.
The hot tears wet my cheek—I wonder why.

BLUE AND GOLD

Oh, lady with the blue eyes like the sea,
So you would lure my Love away from me?
Go weep in the gold glory of your hair!
I laugh—it seems so wild a wish to me!

LAUS AMORIS

There is no part of Love that love can chide;
His restless wings by lovers are denied,
His wanton tricks, caprice and flying feet—
The very lies of Love are justified!

EVEN AS YOU AND I

O brother Man, I hear strange dole of you
From her who flatters and takes toll of you;
She must lay off the blinding veil of Self
To see the strong, true, vibrant soul of you.

REQUIESCAT IN PACE

When Love is dead why stain his lips with lies?
He knows no rest, no honor, when he dies;
But goaded to feign joy and life, he wears
The world's arraignment in his weary eyes.



COULDN'T HEAR AN EXPLOSION

JONES—That fellow at the other table is deaf.
BROWN—Much deaf?

“Must be. They say he can't hear himself eat.”

THE WIFE OF LORRAINE

By H. A. Keays

THEY had been married about a year—a year that after the first few ardent weeks had seemed long to both. Not that Mrs. Lorraine regretted her plunge, for she had a sane conception of human existence, and accepted experience as inevitable. There were many unpleasant incidents in life, but no one in his senses would desire to dispense with it on that account. It was the same with marriage, of course.

Dr. Lorraine did not analyze his plight so candidly and philosophically. When he married Sylvia Dewar he was tremendously in love with her. He had fairly reveled in emotions, and had assumed that he should continue to do so. But at the end of the year he was tired of so many things—which was not strange for a man cursed with a private income just so irritatingly short of his needs, now that he was no longer a bachelor. Trying to be a domestic man, too, of nice, regular habits, bothered him a great deal. He could not see what vital connection there need be between domesticity and loving Sylvia.

In his callow adolescence he had suffered himself to study medicine, and now he practiced it—when he had time. But his patients wearied him with their uninteresting ailments, and he could not ignore a feeling of resentment against them for obtruding these things on him at all.

And then one day, just when he was beginning to think of his humdrum existence as positively loathsome, something happened, and he rushed into his wife's sitting-room in a great state of excitement.

"What do you suppose, Sylvia? There's a splendid opening for a fellow like me in Japan. Loads of money in it. Lee's been talking it into me all the morning. Tokio, of course. Lovely climate, temples, chrysanthemums, and all those funny little bric-à-brac people, you know. You'd go wild about it—the scenery, I mean. Lee says you just can't talk about beauty till you've seen Nikkô. I told him we'd go. Hurrah! Three cheers for Fujisan!"

"You told him we would go?" repeated Mrs. Lorraine, slowly.

"You'd better believe I did," he answered, enthusiastically; and Mrs. Lorraine said nothing more.

The world outside considered it such a providential thing that the husband's turbulence was so fittingly offset by his wife's unflinching sweetness and calm.

After that they talked Japan morning, noon and night. Or, at least, one of them thought they did. For it never occurred to Lorraine that he did all the talking, until one day when he announced to his wife that he had succeeded in disposing of his practice, including the house and furniture.

"Not the furniture, I hope," said Mrs. Lorraine, gently.

"Not the furniture!" he repeated, staring at her. "My dear, we can't lug that to Japan with us. Besides, it would hardly be in style. And there'd be no fun in going if we didn't mean to be more Japanese than they are themselves. We'll out-Jap the Japs."

"Ah, I had not thought of that. But really, Raymond, I shall require a few things to keep house with after

you are gone, and I should much prefer those that have been my own."

He continued staring at her in such amazement that she thought it well to go on, still with the same air of patient sweetness.

"If you will recall your conversations with me, dear, you will see that you have never asked me to go with you. You have simply taken it for granted that I was going with the rest of your effects. I have never for a moment thought of doing so. If I had been meant to live in Japan I should have been born there. But I wasn't, and I really don't regret it."

An hour later she still sat opposite him, serene as the snow on a still mountain peak, unstirred by his fury, untouched by appeal; and at last it dawned on him that neither anger nor tender argument would serve to dislodge her from her position. It was a severe shock to him to discover that anything so fair and feminine could withstand him so absolutely.

"Very well," he said, finally, "then I shall go without you, for I cannot afford to make a fool of myself at this stage of the proceedings."

"Of course you will go without me. I have never expected anything else."

If she had not accepted the consequences so calmly, the situation would have been less exasperating; but while he assured himself that if she persisted he should certainly have to relinquish his prospects in Japan, the idea became rooted in his mind that it would serve her right to take her at her word. Besides, what else could he do? His practice was gone, and he was adrift in the world, without the income that their manner of living rendered indispensable.

He ended in what he thought a compromise. He would go out there and see for himself. Why, he could stay a year, and then perhaps Sylvia might like to take a look at the country herself, if he really found things as ideal as they were represented. You never could tell, though. People liked to talk "big" about what they had seen and you hadn't. But Sylvia might trust him.

He would know whether it was really the kind of thing for which she would care. And he persuaded himself that he read acquiescence in Sylvia's shimmering blue eyes.

He delayed his departure long enough to see her established in a new home much better adapted to her tastes than the rambling, old-fashioned place that they had occupied because of the excellence of its location from a medical point of view. Her father, who had lived with a married son since her mother's death, was to share it with her. And yet, until the very moment of his departure Lorraine hoped against despair that his wife would relent and go with him, and when he went away at last, alone, it was with a passion of bitterness that longed to put the sea between himself and her.

But Mrs. Lorraine was disturbed by no unpleasant reflections as she peacefully reconnoitred the situation. Marriage had freed her from the odious, economical struggles of her girlhood, and therefore she was certain it was not a failure. It was very obstinate of her husband to insist on going to Japan, but she knew well enough that he would weary of freedom sooner than she, and she meant to make the most of her opportunities. There was her voice to cultivate. How indifferent Raymond had been to its possibilities! Oh, he was certainly a trying man to live with. She had often thought it was fortunate for him that he had not married a nagging woman.

He had settled his income on her, and now that it was free from the drain of his expensive habits it provided for her generously, and she set about the reconstruction of her life with a resignation that was saintly.

Her father was an inoffensive old gentleman who generally knew his place without being referred to it, for owing to the exigencies of his late wife's temper he had early learned to have no opinions of his own. But soon after Lorraine's letters began to come, his ineradicable kindness of heart led him to say, with an imper-

sonality that he thought very subtle: "I suppose one could go to him, Sylvia. I dare say it's quite nice there."

His daughter looked him up and down until he felt the marrow shrinking in his bones. Then she said, sweetly: "Yes, one could; and the other one could go back to live with his daughter-in-law."

That was Mr. Dewar's first and final excursion into the forbidden domain of his daughter's marital affairs.

But Lorraine liked Japan. He "fell in love at first sight with the whole outfit," he wrote his wife. The statement included more than she may have contemplated, perhaps. The little toy women were particularly fascinating to him. They were so essentially feminine, and the ones he knew best had no "rights" that an admiring man was bound to respect.

At the end of the first year he told his wife "not to mind." He was making piles of money, and he was coming home soon. He was afraid there were some things in Japan she wouldn't like. As Mrs. Lorraine was still perfectly assured of this, she accepted his advice without protest, and, by degrees, the second year slipped away.

After that, he was always "just coming home"—only he never quite came. Perhaps he never would have come, for he certainly seemed to have found a fitting niche for his picturesque personality among those suave and ornamental people. But there came at last a day when he staggered into his office, white and gasping, holding to his lips a handkerchief on which there was a crimson spot, the danger signal of that accursed inheritance which had left him alone in the world and accountable to no one until his marriage.

And now, alone again, fighting with his fear, there sprang up in him a sudden uncontrollable longing for his home, for his wife, for the touch of her fingers tender in ministry to him.

Three days later he sailed for America, and with every onward plunge of the vessel, with every rev-

olution of the wheels in the endless overland journey, impatience to possess again all that he had voluntarily relinquished burned feverishly and fiercely in his heart.

Of course, he had meant to let them know he was coming, and so he naturally ended by arriving unannounced.

It was a dismal evening early in November when he reached again the home he had left in such bitterness three years before. He was admitted by a servant—rather, he admitted himself, brushing past her and disposing his impedimenta on the hall table, greatly to her consternation, until he said, abruptly:

"I'm Dr. Lorraine. Where is my wife?"

A door behind him opened cautiously, and Mr. Dewar appeared, attracted by the unwonted bustle in the well-ordered little household.

"Dr. Lorraine? Raymond?" he said, slowly, as if in doubtful identification of the apparition before him.

"Yes, yes. Where is Sylvia?"

"Oh, she's out. But she'll come home," added the old gentleman, reassuringly. "But come in. Come in by the fire. This is really—ah! quite a surprise, quite a surprise. An unexpected pleasure, in fact."

He ambled aimlessly about, fussily anxious to be kind, but hampered in his hospitable intent by his ever latent instinct that he might be doing something open to reproof. At last, when he had worn every safe suggestion threadbare, he sat down and merely gazed innocuously at his son-in-law.

"You don't look very—very—rugged," he hazarded at length.

"Oh, but I am," answered Lorraine, quickly.

What was it in the very atmosphere of this house which had already stirred him to a fierce determination to hide the dread that was eating out his heart?

His wife's work-basket rested on the stand beside him, and his keen eye spied in it a dainty little collar, with an embroidered anchor in one

corner. He smiled at that, and visions of her years ago in pretty boating costumes came into his mind and awoke a passion of forgotten memories.

"But where is she?" he inquired again, suddenly, with a touch of the peremptory in his tone. "Is she often out like this?"

"Oh, no, Raymond; but you couldn't expect her to stay in all the time waiting for you, could you?"

This remark sounded distinctly sarcastic, but Mr. Dewar was utterly incapable of intending it so. With him words were merely the vehicle of bald fact. "You see, Raymond, your return has always been so—so—"

"Yes, yes, I know," interrupted Lorraine; "but it is getting late."

"Ah, well, music hath charms," said Mr. Dewar, very inappropriately, it seemed to Lorraine. "But if Sylvia only knew you were here, I'm sure she would hurry, Raymond."

They sat there in fragmentary discussion of Japan and such other topics as the old gentleman could secure, until eleven o'clock, when there was the sudden ripple of laughter outside, followed by the opening and closing of the front door. Lorraine sprang to his feet as his wife swept into the room, accompanied by a gentleman who detained her for a moment while he lifted her white opera cloak from her shoulders with the privileged air of one apt in the service.

"Ah, perhaps he is a horror," she was saying, evidently in answer to some remark, "but it's a divine voice; and who cares for the rest!"

As she stepped lightly forward her glance rested on her husband. For one throbbing instant she stood silent. Then she turned her head slightly to toss a dismissal to the man behind her.

"You may go now. My husband is here."

Stephen Armour laughed, then frowned. "May the foul fiend soon fly away with him, then," he murmured, and though he moved toward the door, it was with a lingering step, un-

til he heard her say, in her sweet, velvety voice:

"Oh, Raymond, have you really come home!"

Whatever visions may have etched their magic outlines on Lorraine's eager fancy in the last few weeks vanished as his wife's light hand for a moment met his in a greeting that, to him, was like a plunge into Arctic waters. It defined her ideas of their relationship with a clearness that left no room for question. He was there—in his own house—on sufferance; an alien, dependent on the chill courtesy of a hostess who evidently felt under scant obligation to be gracious.

He dropped back into his chair, silent and distraught, and watched her as she slowly drew off her long gloves—very slowly, for she was quietly considering her case, and she wanted a little time. She stood there, a lovely woman, proudly conscious of herself, with no trace of the crude, girlish charm that had tantalized his memory of late. He was bewildered by the change he both saw and divined in her. She was there, so close to him, his wife, and yet a million leagues of whirling space could not have held him more completely at bay.

"When did you arrive?" she asked at last, slowly turning her eyes to him.

"Oh, I don't know. A couple of hours ago, I dare say."

He hardly knew what he said, he was thinking of her so vehemently. Even of her beauty he felt a certain awe. There was nothing Japanese about it. The golden gleams in her pretty hair; the face, with its melting tints of pink and ivory, rising like a flower above the dull green velvet of the gown imprisoning the exquisite grace of her figure as perfectly as the sheath enfolds the lily . . . Ah! a sigh escaped him for the days when he had calmly appropriated her charm as his due.

"Where is papa?" she asked next.

Mr. Dewar, having laboriously achieved the conviction that this was

surely one of the times when nothing was any business of his, had discreetly retired to the safety of slumber. It was always a great relief to him that there was only one way of sleeping. Had there been a choice of styles, he would have feared to indulge in any, lest his particular method should offend.

"I hope they have taken proper care of you," said Mrs. Lorraine, as she rang a bell, and then gave directions about the preparation of the south room.

"It is so warm and sunny," she explained, "and I dare say you will find our climate rather trying after Japan."

Lorraine lay awake most of that night, thinking, thinking.

But at last, toward morning, he fell asleep, only to be harassed on a battle ground of dreams with wild, cruel cries of victory and pain, until suddenly, amid the horrid clash of carnage, there arose the shrill sweetness of a baby voice, clear and high as the sound of the light wind in an æolian harp, and the tumult died into the forgotten distance, the sky was blue again, the red fields green, and he was once more a happy-hearted child, chasing a flippant butterfly.

"Papa! papa! Is 'oo papa?"

The birds were singing up there in the slender tree tops so near to heaven, and the boy stood still in the daisied meadow to listen to their songs.

"Papa! papa! Is 'oo papa?"

Lorraine sprang up, wide awake now, and there, close beside him, looking at him with eyes so curiously, so undoubtedly his own, stood a tiny sailor boy, in a white suit, with a wide, blue-anchored collar.

"Is 'oo gweat, big, bwown beah man?" queried the mite, daringly, evidently charmed by the suggestive possibilities of his father's appearance. "Does 'oo bite boys?"

He flew to the foot of the bed for safety, peering forth every now and then in a delicious agony lest the "beah man" should suddenly devour him.

Oh, it was cruel! As Lorraine

looked at his child, his tense eyes clouded with hot tears—tears such as he had not known since he was a little one like this.

"Don't kwy. Is 'oo naughty boy, too?"

A terrible exclamation had risen to the man's lips, but he checked it instantly, curbed into silence by the touch of a soft baby hand on his sunburnt cheek.

"What's your name?" he asked, in a voice that shook.

"Waymond Dwoor Lowaine," answered the child, with ponderous gravity.

His boy! And she had never told him! He could have cursed her. What relentless fiend of a woman was she who could write him month after month, year after year, and never tell him that into his life there had blossomed this sweetest of human experiences?

He clenched his hand and struck the side of the bed in his helpless anger. The little fellow shrieked with delight; it was all play to him.

But by the time Lorraine was dressed the joy of the father was already sapping his heart of its bitterness. It was his, this tiny, chattering thing, that prowled about among his possessions with a calm audacity that secretly delighted him.

They went down to breakfast together, hand in hand, to find Mrs. Lorraine already seated at the table.

"Oh, of course he found you out," she said, nodding at the child. "He's a regular prying Peter."

"Yes," answered Lorraine, briefly. The very sight of her, smiling and fair, with her odious affectations of courtesy, filled him with fresh rage. Did she think the existence of his boy could be announced to him with impunity in any such trivial way as that?

In the days that followed there were times when Mrs. Lorraine felt herself baffled, a new and annoying sensation to her. Ever since the birth of her little boy she had patiently anticipated her moment of revenge, and now was she to be balked of it in this high-handed way? To have her hus-

band ignore it, after having pictured to herself a thousand times the scene, so passionate on his part, so cool on hers, why, it was simply inexplicable, in the face of her knowledge of him!

But he persisted and gave no sign, with the result that her manner to him grew less certain, and, unconsciously, almost conciliatory. And that made him easy prey. For, resist it as he might, fight it as he would, he knew that he awoke each day with a fiercer craving for her favor; and when the regal austerity of her manner was graced by a more tolerant mood, in one intoxicating moment he swept the whole gamut of an unanswered lover's hopes and fears.

At other times he silently stormed at the outrage of the situation. He was her husband—how dare she define his boundaries! He would put an end to such nonsense. But the next time he had an opportunity of doing so his resolution melted like wax in an eager flame.

One Sunday evening, as he and Mr. Dewar were sitting quiet and alone over their cigars, the old gentleman said slowly, and as if the admission were being forced from him against his will:

"Sylvia is going to sing to-night, Raymond. I thought perhaps you might like to know."

"Sylvia going to sing!" Lorraine looked incredulous. "Where is she going to sing?"

"Oh, over there at St. Jude's. She does sometimes on Sunday evenings, after the service. They're pretty high at St. Jude's. Candles, acolytes and confessionals, you know. But it's all very pretty. And when she sings there's always a great crowd. She does it just to please Mr. Armour. He's the organist. Oh, Sylvia can sing!" The old father chuckled happily.

Ah, that was the fellow, then! Lorraine had not thought of him since. But he saw him clearly enough now, bending over her to lift the cloak from her beautiful shoulders.

"I'll be going over presently, Raymond. Don't you want to go, too?"

"Thanks, yes," said Lorraine, shortly.

A little later he was curiously studying his surroundings in the crowded church, and trying to remember when he had last been caught in an ecclesiastical trap like this. Not while he was in Japan, certainly.

But at last the service ended, and the choir faded away in the recessional, their voices lost in faint echoes among the arches grown dim beyond the lowered lights. The congregation waited, hushed and expectant, while the organ played on in golden clusters of flute-like notes, sweet and faint—the echo of a dream-song dying in the dawn.

And then suddenly, far out upon the incensed amber air, there rose the seraphic splendor of a woman's voice that one moment swept the imagination upward along its own triumphant flight and the next sank to a mere quivering strand of gossamer song, thrilling the heart with the most sacred impulses it knew.

There was no singer visible to cumber with personality the ideal suggestiveness of the voice that rose and fell from some mysterious source—the voice of an angel lost for a moment to Paradise, that she might touch the hearts of men with a vision of the beauty of holiness. For under its magic spell there were bright young eyes that glistened in the thought of a future noble in achievement, and dull eyes that grew dim with hallowed memories of that long ago when the heart was young and the near blue sky was heaven.

But it was not an angel. It was only a beautiful woman who stood there behind the screen, looking into the insistent eyes of the man whose domination of her was supreme only in these moments of musical ecstasy. For, as he knew full well, when the song was stilled in her slender throat, when the organ no longer throbbed to the caress of his lingering touch, and they had left the deserted church with its gray silences behind them, she would look at him with the calm blue eyes whose stormy deeps he had lost

his power to stir, and coldly disown those delirious moments when she had plighted her soul to his with all the splendid passion of her voice.

When Mrs. Lorraine reached home she looked pale and tired, and her husband watched her hungrily as she leaned back in her chair with closed eyes.

But suddenly he bent down and touched her slim fingers.

"Oh, Sylvia, why did you never tell me you sang like that?"

"Like what?"

"Oh, like an angel!" he whispered, passionately.

She bent toward him, and her fingers unconsciously tightened about his.

"But do I really sing like that?" she asked, with an air of such innocence that it was easy for him to pour forth the unbridled lavishness of his admiration. She listened to him with enchanting patience, and when at last he leaned forward and kissed her white wrist, she did not repulse him. But she was thinking only of her voice—her beautiful voice.

He soon realized that this gift was her vulnerable point, and he utilized his knowledge to the utmost. But she wearied of his constant requests to go to the church when she practiced.

"You don't really care anything for music," she told him. "You don't know anything about it, and it would irritate me to have you sitting there."

"But I care for you," he ventured, humbly.

"Ah, to be sure." She made a gesture of impatience.

But his opportunity came; for one afternoon, shortly after she had gone out, it began to rain, changing finally into a driving storm of sleet, and he remembered that she had no umbrella. He would take her one. As he walked along he thought what a miracle it was that he felt so well; there had been no return of the symptoms that had so alarmed him in Japan. Ah, if he could only make real those feverish dreams that possessed him day and night—dreams of a future with Sylvia and his little boy, which veiled it-

self alluringly in a roseate mist of hope and happiness!

He reached the church, and groped his way up the winding stair that led to the choir, pausing every now and then to listen to the velvet sweep of his wife's voice as it conquered the dim distances of the empty sanctuary.

At last he could see her, and his eyes devoured the vision greedily, until there stole upon him a disquieting sense of something in her appearance quite foreign to his knowledge of her. The church was already dark with the early December dusk, but a flickering gas jet defined her face with weird, Rembrandtesque effect, cutting it against the gloomy deeps about her with the clearness of a cameo. But what touched into blue flame the eyes that for him were always calm? What gave the pulsing, passionate ring to the voice that had for him no tender note?

He leaned a little further forward.

The next moment her song broke into a ragged scream at the sight of her husband towering above her—a gaunt, avenging human crag, ready to fall upon her and grind her frail existence into dust.

"Come home!" As he spoke he struck the sheet of music from her hand, and it fluttered to her feet.

Stephen Armour whirled round lightly on his organ bench.

"Ah, Dr. Lorraine!" he exclaimed, easily. "This is a pleasure I have long anticipated."

"Come home!" Lorraine laid his hand roughly on his wife's arm.

"Oh, certainly, if you are in a hurry!" she answered, coldly.

She had instantly recovered from her fright at his unexpected appearance beside her, and was now, for a variety of subtle reasons, not unflattered by his folly.

"But please pick up my music first," she added, in a voice that had in it the ripple of a Summer stream beneath the sunny blue.

With a smothered exclamation Lorraine stooped for the sheet, but he met her cold eyes with a strange look as he handed it back to her.

Then, with a parting smile for Stephen Armour, she passed on down the stairs with her husband; but before the door shut them outside in the cold swirl of the storm, they both caught the mocking peal of a wedding march behind them. When they reached home, after a silent walk, Lorraine doggedly followed his wife up stairs, and though she turned on the threshold of her room and faced him defiantly, he brushed her roughly on before him, and walked in with the air of a master on his own ground. Then, after he had locked the door and put the key in his pocket, he sat down and looked steadily at her. She took no more notice of him than of the air she breathed. When she had removed her outer wraps she carefully considered the wet edges of her gown, and laid out another to replace it. Then, as time passed and her husband still said nothing, she breathed into life little maddening memories of the song she had been singing in the church, while she slowly unhooked her dress and let it slip off her beautiful shoulders.

With a passionate exclamation Lorraine leaped from his seat and caught her fiercely by the arm.

"Now you will understand," he began, hoarsely, "that from this day there's to be an end of this fool business. You are my wife, and after this you will behave yourself as such. And as for that contemptible cur of a music-maker, I tell you—" he struck the pretty dressing-table so heavily that its dainty tortoiseshell appointments quivered and snapped—"I tell you that if you ever sing another note for him as long as you live—" He stopped suddenly, and into his eyes there flamed a look at which she shivered. "Do you promise me?" he breathed hotly down upon her after a moment's silence.

"I? Oh, let me think!"

She unclasped his rough grip of her and sank back into a pale blue velvet chair, her attitude cruelly full of seductive grace and allurements for the tortured man beside her.

"Yes, think!" he went on. "And

think of how you let me go on there, year after year, and never told me of my little child, my little boy!"

His tone was passionately, pathetically tender, and the blue in her eyes darkened resentfully.

"It was all right, no doubt, to neglect me year after year?"

"That was your own doing!" he cried, vehemently.

"Oh, no," she said, coldly.

But there was nothing cold in the light rise and fall of her warm breath or in the fair curve of her flushed cheek and the soft beauty of her neck and arms against the velvet cushions.

And these were things that woke madness in the veins of the man who had once, for a little while, known what it was to drain love's cup with her, and looking at her now, he forgot everything save that his covetous arms ached for her.

"Sylvia, forgive me!" he whispered. "Let us forget it all. My darling, I love you, I love you now!"

His parched lips touched her hair, her cheek, and she endured him with a silent yielding that he interpreted to his own wild fancy.

What else could she do? There was something in him of which she felt suddenly afraid. But she had never known herself so alien to him as while he held her close to his stormy heart and whispered his myriad endearments into her reluctant ear.

After that Mrs. Lorraine went to the church no more, and the Sunday nights slipped away without the sound of her lovely voice rising in sacred ecstasy within the hallowed walls. To her husband, starved so long and eager for her tenderness, she seemed to have become at once the wife who had thrilled his dreams, and he lived through the delirious weeks that followed in careless defiance of the beckoning spectre in the background. For life was crowning him now with all he had most passionately craved; and what recked he if his brief pulse beat too fast?

Sylvia and he fell into a pretty Darby and Joan habit of taking their

walks together, and one afternoon, as they were hurrying home in the fast-gathering dusk, a man abruptly but-tholed Lorraine.

"Come into my office just a minute," he said. "I tell you, doctor, it's a chance in a thousand. If I only had the money myself——!"

Lorraine hesitated and looked doubtfully at his wife. He was a born speculator; Sylvia was not.

"Oh, never mind me," she said, quickly. "I'll walk on, and I dare say you'll catch up to me in a moment. But he won't," she added to herself, as, once free from him, she walked rapidly on. "He'll stay there until he's at least a millionaire, in his mind."

And then, with a deep sigh of relief, she deliberately turned her steps in the direction of St. Jude's.

As she opened the little private door the soft, seeking notes of the organ stole out to greet her, and with a swift throb in her throat she realized that the organist was playing the song he had written for her.

And so it happened that as Stephen Armour sat there alone, vainly trying to fill the aching pauses with the remembered magic of her notes, her voice broke out on the gloom about him like a brilliant bird of paradise swaying against the cold, gray sky.

He turned his head and looked at her, and then without a break they went on together to the splendid climax.

But when the end came, and silence fell, he still held her with his eyes until a door banged noisily below them. She started away from him, and her face grew white with fear, but with a quick thought he leaned over and turned out the light. For there was someone struggling with hurried, uncertain steps up the twisting stair, and for a few tense moments they listened to him, almost breathlessly. There was the petulant snap of a match against the wall, but it fell from the nervous fingers that held it and was smothered in the darkness, and then, after a silence that seemed eternal and terrifying in its threat, the intruder went slowly down the stairs,

marking his exit by dull, thundering echoes in every far corner of the church.

But behind him, in the dim chancel, the organ breathed softly, derisively, a few bars from a lovely Nunc Dimittis, and then Mrs. Lorraine stole quickly away by another door. She had had her longed-for moment of ecstasy, but before she reached home her mood was cold again. Stephen Armour—what did she care for him? The caress and insistence of one man were so exactly like those of another. But the music! Ah, that made a divine difference!

There was no one in the parlors, and with a gasp of relief she hurried to her room. But when she opened the door she faced her husband.

"Where have you been?" he demanded, masterfully.

"I? Oh, I went into Mrs. Carthage's, to inquire for the baby." She moved about restlessly, with a nervousness new to her.

"You have been in the church!" He spoke with savage deliberation.

"No." She looked at him in steady denial. But she knew he did not believe her, and suddenly her impulse changed. She was so sick of his passion and its constant demands on her, its frenzied interference with the only things for which she cared. "Yes, I was there; alone with Stephen Armour. We heard you come stumbling up the stair." She broke into a sweet ripple of laughter.

Her husband stepped toward her, a terrible look on his white, drawn face. And then the next instant he wavered and sank helplessly into a chair, his handkerchief pressed tightly against his lips. But the quick scarlet stream had its way with him, and looking up at her in dumb misery, he saw the leap of freedom in her lovely eyes.

The sting of death? Ah, death was sweet, compared to the thought that pierced his slipping senses like a swift, cruel dart.

"Sylvia!"

She bent down and kissed him. It was an easy concession—for the last time.

And with the touch of her red lips on his forehead he went out into the darkness alone.

A few moments later Mrs. Lorraine went lightly down stairs. In the hall she met her father.

"Where is Raymond? I have some letters for him."

"Why, Raymond is dead," she answered, gently.

"Dead? Raymond?" The old man shrank from her as if she had given him a blow.

"Yes, dead," she repeated, with a touch of impatience in her clear voice. "Dead."



EASTER PRAYERS

WHITE lilies bank the altar rail;
The Easter sunshine, cold and pale,
Through stained glass windows, drifting down,
Rests, like a brightly burnished crown,
Upon a golden head bowed low
Before me, in the second row.

Her red lips move in silent prayer
For all mankind—ah! does she care
That one poor sinner, kneeling near,
Is lost in haunting doubt and fear,
Whose litany this day must be:
"She loves me—loves me not—loves me?"
Dear, you for all the world have prayed—
I prayed for *you*, sweet Easter maid!

FLORENCE A. JONES.



IMPROVED PROVERBS

QUACKS are stubborn things.
It's a wise girl who knows her own mind.
Society's the mother of convention.
Home was not built in a day.
Modesty is the best policy.
Circumstances alter faces.
A rolling gait gathers remorse.
All's not old that titters.
Let us eat, drink and be married, for to-morrow we dye.
Charity uncovers a multitude of sins.

CAROLYN WELLS



THE IMPORTANT THING

SHE—I will be true to you, George.
HE—But will you lie to others for me?

AVANT ET APRÈS

Par Michel Provins

GIVERDET (*dans son lit, malade, cherchant à lire un verdict de circonstances atténuantes dans la physionomie du Docteur Gélatin occupé à lui tâter le pouls*)—Eh bien?

LE DOCTEUR GÉLATIN (*remettant sa montre dans sa poche*)—Cent douze! Il faut faire l'opération!

GIVERDET (*sursautant*)—L'opération! Je suis donc en danger?

LE DOCTEUR—Ne vous agitez pas! Vous n'êtes pas en danger maintenant, mais vous le seriez demain, si je ne vous opérerais pas!

GIVERDET (*navré*)—Vous me sauverez, n'est ce pas, docteur? mon cher docteur?

LE DOCTEUR—Mais certainement!

GIVERDET—Quand on se porte bien, dans les conversations, on n'a pas l'air de tenir à la vie, et puis, tout d'un coup, lorsqu'on se trouve en face de—de la chose, c'est instinctif— Vous me comprenez?

LE DOCTEUR—Je vous comprends très bien. Soyez tranquille!

GIVERDET (*s'attendrissant*)—Oh! ma pauvre femme! mes pauvres enfants!

LE DOCTEUR—Mais ne vous énervez donc pas! puisque je vous dis que ça ira tout seul!

GIVERDET—Il y a longtemps que vous me connaissez—je ne suis pas absolument riche—une bonne aisance, voilà tout; mais si vous me sauvez, vous n'obligerez pas un ingrat! La moitié de ce que j'ai—

LE DOCTEUR (*souriant*)—Je n'en demande pas tant! Je suis avant tout votre ami; mon dévouement vous est acquis. N'ayez donc pas peur!

GIVERDET—Je n'ai pas peur! (*Après un temps*) Alors, ce sera?

LE DOCTEUR—Demain matin.

GIVERDET—Demain! (*Geignant*) Ah! la santé, la santé, c'est l'incalculable fortune!

LE DOCTEUR (*se retirant*)—Reposez-vous, surtout! Tâchez de dormir. Je repasserai ce soir!

GIVERDET (*inquiet*)—Pourquoi faire?

LE DOCTEUR—Mais—pour bavarder un instant, en rentrant chez moi. (*Le réconfortant.*) Songez aux bonnes parties de chasse que nous ferons encore, cet été, ensemble!

GIVERDET (*s'effondrant dans les oreillers*)—Ah! la chasse!

MADAME GIVERDET (*au docteur, dans l'antichambre*)—Comment le trouvez-vous?

LE DOCTEUR (*soucieux*)—Pas bien! Il n'est que temps!

MADAME GIVERDET—Mais vous ne craignez pas—?

LE DOCTEUR—On doit toujours craindre lorsqu'on est réduit à essayer une pareille opération! Je vous le disais bien—nous avons trop attendu!

MADAME GIVERDET (*pleurant*)—Ah! docteur!

LE DOCTEUR—Il nous reste encore une chance sur deux—et la Providence, si vous y croyez. Ne pleurez pas; il ne faut pas qu'il s'aperçoive! Adieu, madame; à tout-à-l'heure!

II

SIX MOIS APRÈS

GIVERDET, *fringant, le chapeau sur l'oreille, le cigare allumé, se dispose à sortir.*

MADAME GIVERDET—Où vas-tu, cette après-midi?

GIVERDET—Un tour de boulevard, une heure au Cercle, et je rentre.

MADAME GIVERDET—Ce serait peut-être convenable de passer chez le docteur Gélatin.

GIVERDET—Chez le docteur?

MADAME GIVERDET—Dame! voilà quatre mois que tu es sur pieds, et tu n'as pas encore été—

GIVERDET—Je te demande pardon, je lui ai fait une visite de remerciement!

MADAME GIVERDET—C'est peu! Avant ton opération, il dînait ici très souvent; il semble que nous l'écarterions. En somme, il t'a sauvé!

GIVERDET—Oh! sauvé! Il m'a avoué lui-même, la veille de l'opération, que ce n'était rien du tout!

MADAME GIVERDET—Oui, mais à moi il m'avait confié, au contraire, que c'était très grave!

GIVERDET—Pour se faire valoir!

MADAME GIVERDET—Tu es injuste; Gélatin a toujours été excellent pour nous!

GIVERDET—Oui, mais enfin, si j'avais été si malade que ça, je ne me serais pas remis en cinq semaines!

MADAME GIVERDET—Cela prouve que tu as été bien opéré, et bien soigné!

GIVERDET—Bien opéré! bien opéré! Eh! justement! Tu sais bien ce que je lui ai promis?

MADAME GIVERDET—Je sais, tu lui as parlé de ta fortune dans un moment de—

GIVERDET—Dans un moment de trac! Je le reconnais, j'ai eu le trac, bêtement! Ça arrive à tout le monde! Je lui ai dit: "Docteur, sauvez-moi, et je vous donne la moitié de ce que je possède!"

MADAME GIVERDET—On peut le dire—

GIVERDET—Sans le faire, parbleu! C'est évident! Une fois en équilibre, on raisonne, on comprend bien que l'homme de l'art, à lui seul, ne vous a pas ramenés de si loin! Seulement, je suis embêté tout de même, parce que, vis-à-vis de lui, ça me force à un certain chiffre! Je ne sais pas, moi! Quinze mille, dix mille!

MADAME GIVERDET—Si on tournait la difficulté? Le docteur étant de nos amis, on pourrait peut-être remplacer l'argent—par un objet d'art?

GIVERDET—Un objet d'art? C'est une idée! Quelque chose de bien, par exemple!

MADAME GIVERDET—Déjà avec mille francs—

GIVERDET—Oui, oui, mille francs! douze cents même! Il faut savoir reconnaître! Nous ne pratiquons pas l'indépendance du cœur, nous! Ton idée est excellente! Un objet d'art! Je trouve même qu'en raison de nos relations avec lui, c'est plus discret—moins brutal que l'argent!

MADAME GIVERDET—Un groupe, une statue, c'est toujours décoratif dans un salon—sur une cheminée!

GIVERDET—Avec un socle! Nous ferons graver une dédicace: *A M. le docteur Gélatin, hommage d'amitié et de reconnaissance*. Les médecins adorent ces machines-là! C'est une réclame vis-à-vis de leurs clients! Ça leur prouve qu'ils en ont au moins sauvé un!

MADAME GIVERDET—Tu vas t'occuper de chercher?

GIVERDET—Aujourd'hui même.

MADAME GIVERDET—Si tu prenais un *David* venant de tuer *Goliath*?

GIVERDET—Avec la tête coupée? Pour un cabinet de chirurgien, ce n'est peut-être pas très heureux! J'aimerais mieux une *Vénus*.

MADAME GIVERDET—Bien léger!

GIVERDET—*Le Chanteur Florentin* alors? ou le buste d'*Hippocrate*? Enfin, je vais voir!

MADAME GIVERDET—Attends! Tu ferais bien d'aller un peu sonder Gélatin, avant de rien décider, car enfin, s'il croit que nous lui réglerons des honoraires, il ne faut pas qu'il prenne l'objet d'art pour un cadeau supplémentaire!

GIVERDET—Diable! tu as raison! Je passe d'abord chez lui—puisqu'il faut s'exécuter, autant en finir! (*Il sort.*)

III

LE SOIR, CHEZ LES GIVERDET

GIVERDET (*rentrant en coup de vent*)—Sais-tu la nouvelle?

MADAME GIVERDET—Quelle nouvelle?

GIVERDET—Gélatin est mort!

MADAME GIVERDET (*interdite*)—Mort?

GIVERDET—Subitement—dans sa

voiture, ce matin, pendant qu'il faisait ses visites! En arrivant chez lui, j'ai appris—tu vois mon émotion!

MADAME GIVERDET—Pauvre docteur! Décidément, on a beau connaître les maladies! Ce que c'est que de nous! C'était un brave homme!

GIVERDET—Un honnête homme, tu peux dire—dans le vrai sens du mot! Dévoué, désintéressé et très habile! Car, en somme, il m'a sauvé, il n'y a pas à dire!

MADAME GIVERDET—Oui, c'est une perte! Est-ce qu'il laisse de la famille?

GIVERDET—Mais non, tu sais bien, il ne lui restait que ce neveu qu'il a perdu l'année dernière.

MADAME GIVERDET—Alors, qui est-ce qui l'accompagnera?

GIVERDET—Les amis ne manqueront pas à ses obsèques! Tout Paris l'estimait! Et puis, nous serons là!

MADAME GIVERDET (*après un temps*)—Je pense à notre dette envers lui. Puisqu'il n'a pas d'héritiers, il ne peut plus être question d'honoraires ou d'objet d'art!

GIVERDET—Évidemment! Aussi j'ai déjà songé à une magnifique couronne!

MADAME GIVERDET—Ah! c'est ce que j'allais te dire!

GIVERDET—Aussi ton avis, n'est-ce pas?

MADAME GIVERDET—Oui, oui! Pauvre docteur! Il verra que nous ne l'avons pas oublié!

GIVERDET (*sceptique*)—Oh! il verra! Est-ce que tu t'imagines? Enfin, ça ne fait rien, c'est un devoir à remplir. Je vais tout de suite commander!

IV

CHEZ LE FLEURISTE

LE FLEURISTE (*répondant aux ques-*

tions de Giverdet)—Mon Dieu! monsieur, nous pouvons vous faire quelque chose de très bien, en roses naturelles, dans les trois cents francs.

GIVERDET (*sursautant*)—Trois cents francs! C'est que je ne pensais pas y mettre—

LE FLEURISTE—Cependant, monsieur, pour un ami intime?

GIVERDET—Oh! intime! Je vous ai dit "intime?" C'est de l'intimité comme on peut en avoir dans Paris! Quand on voit les gens deux fois, on dit que ce sont des intimes!

LE FLEURISTE—Alors, je pourrais peut-être dans les cent cinquante francs—mais ce serait mesquin.

GIVERDET—Ah! ce serait mesquin? Il vaut mieux ne faire pas les choses que de les mal faire! Dans les cinquante francs, en fleurs artificielles, vous n'avez rien?

LE FLEURISTE—Oh! monsieur, je n'oserais pas vous offrir.

GIVERDET—Oui, oui! vous avez raison! Je vais consulter Madame Giverdet, et je vous donnerai un coup de téléphone au sujet de la couronne de trois cents! (*Il sort.*)

GIVERDET (*revenant chez lui*)—Trois cents, c'est raide! (*Après quelques minutes, en marchant*) Je ne crois pas beaucoup que les défunts voient les actes des vivants—une fois qu'on est mort—alors, pourquoi cette couronne? Gélatin n'a pas de parents; à quoi servirait ma manifestation? Ce n'est pas quelques fleurs de plus ou de moins! Il y en aura tant! Tandis qu'une bonne prière—si réellement l'âme survit—une bonne prière lui fera plus de bien! (*Après avoir réfléchi*) Oui, décidément, ça vaut mieux, pas de couronne! Au fond, c'est toujours une pose! Et puis, le vrai deuil se porte dans le cœur!



WITH THE SHADES DOWN

SIMMONS—Where did Uglymug court his wife?
KIMMONS—I think it was in the dark.

BALLADE OF THE BORROWER MONTH

THAT month whose signet is the Ram
 Rules madly as an early Czar;
 Between the Lion and the Lamb
 She crushes all beneath her car.
 Her stinging knouts leave many a scar,
 That burn and throb with fever heat;
 We're only serfs spurned by her feet
 Through dark, interminable days;
 But though she blind me with her sleet,
 I love March for her mad, wild ways.

A child of Summer though I am,
 And prize the honey in her jar,
 Some cantrip in their bitter dram
 Endears these winds that rend and mar.
 Bare branches, or a jasmine star
 That makes the whole world soft and sweet?
 To struggle up a stormy street,
 Or drift unhatted down blue bays?
 Your choice is mine—but, I repeat,
 I love March for her mad, wild ways.

When Leo's roar becomes a sham,
 The Lamb still bleating from afar,
 March hoists a crocus oriflamme
 And shows how lovely tulips are.
 Then, sheathing every scimitar
 Wherewith she pierced us, makes retreat
 In borrowed braveries—O, cheat!—
 Young April's tears, a smile of May's.
 Yet pardoning this last deceit,
 I love March for her mad, wild ways.

ENVOY

Dear Alison, the song's complete,
 And all for you; for you, my sweet,
 Are like the month it seeks to praise.
 Ah! but remember, I entreat,
 I love March for her mad, wild ways.

EDWARD W. BARNARD.

SECRET STRINGS

By Kate Jordan

(Mrs. F. M. Vermilye)

YOUR Madeira has witchery in it, Jack, my cigar is just right, and I like that sound of rain on the glass—it shuts us in.

All such things touch secret strings
For heavy hearts to hear.

So Rosetti said, and he ought to know. Well, old man, I am disposed to let the strings vibrate, and tell you all about it.

Where did I see her first? That is, indeed, a man's question. A woman, I fancy, would have asked, What is she like?

Well, four years ago, one of those soft, wet mornings full of a tempering haze which visit Paris just as Winter melts into Spring, found me strolling along the Boulevard Sebastopol. It was Sunday, and I had gone to that *bourgeois* quarter to see the common people on their day of rest. There are times when the common people are interesting; they wear their emotions on the outside, as they do their blouses.

Of course, one could not be in that neighborhood on a Sunday without following the straggling numbers who seemed definitely going somewhere. I expected to be landed in a church, but found myself in the Temple—an incongruous name for that motley market where everything is sold, from potatoes to old armor. On the upper floor, while I stood watching an old fellow playing his fiddle as he squatted among his antique bronzes and brass candlesticks, I became aware of the fragrance of flowers somewhere near. A few feet away an old woman was

calling attention to a perfect garden of plants and blossoms. It was then I saw the lady first. She was buying white narcissus.

How can I describe to you just what she looked like and how she impressed me? It's pretty hard, for I realize that though I paint her portrait in words, you will not know just what a curious trick her lashes had, you cannot know her smile, nor why the way her hair grew round her ear should have made an *aura* creep over me from the mystery we call charm. So many women have hair like flaming Autumn leaves; so many have soft, dark eyes; so many have clear, white skins and red mouths. Ah, you can't see her at all, for her red hair was like mist on her brow, her white skin seemed to have been drenched in milk, and her mouth was like the "thread of scarlet" of which Solomon sings. The character of her face suggested Récamier in David's portrait of her—you recall how the chin goes into a sharp, piquant point?

She wore a drab homespun gown with a loose Norfolk jacket, and a black hat was bent back from her face. She was really indifferently dressed. I knew at once, however, that she was an American; when I heard her soft voice asking questions in imperfect French I was sure of it.

"An artist, I'll wager," said I, and followed her.

She carried the huge bunch of narcissus across her arms as a woman does a child and hurried to a place where two other girls were buying pewter steins.

"See here—only two francs. Won't

it be lovely in the Mexican bowl?" she asked, and smiled adorably.

Well, they walked away in the mist, and I followed them. But they went into the Madeleine for mass, carrying their packages. In the crush coming out I missed them. Though I stayed in Paris four months, and never forgot her face, I did not see her there again.

Do you remember last year when I went off for a mope in the very hey-day of Horse Show week and took unto myself Ned Moodey's house in Connecticut? You don't know Ned? Well, his house is a queer, tidy little place not unlike foresters' cottages in Scotland, with latticed windows, diamond panes and a roof with abrupt, triangular rises, eaves, and all that sort of thing. One of my inexplicable and sudden attacks of *ennui* had seized me; I had sickened of the society puppet show, yet was not quite in the mood for bolting off to Cairo or even to Hot Springs. I sent up my own horses, stacked Ned's house with some good bottles and cigars, sent up a ripping cook and heaps of books, and prepared for a good loaf, with Nature all about me in a tearful mood. You were in Japan, and only two fellows knew where to find me. Oh, I breathed big breaths the night I took possession, I can tell you, as I sat by the roaring fire and smoked, while the trees tapped on the windows. Free! I felt like a Crusoe, well housed and with every creature comfort—by Jove, how that man could cook a saddle of mutton!

I had been there about two weeks, and was returning late in the afternoon after a long ride. I found myself on a winding little path going down hill. It was a gray day; dead leaves were falling in a ghostly way; people were burning the leaves already fallen, and a permeating, sluggish smoke filled the air like a gruesome incense. In that haze, on that road, I saw her again, and the content of the Crusoe fled.

She was in dead black, a long cloak flapping backward; her hair was a bit of the Autumn red, gathered

under her hat. She carried a light walking-stick and occasionally laid it over her shoulder—I found out afterward she had a trick of doing that, and it was very *chic*.

I walked my horse past her and met her eyes. They were serious, rested on me a second, and looked past me. When the wider road was reached I ambled at a safe distance behind and saw her enter a plain little house, set back among a few trees, near the village; a solemn little place, with narrow piazza and plain door, which looked as if it had been built by a good Presbyterian early in the century. She went around it and entered at the back.

In a garden down the road a man was shoveling the leaves into heaps.

"I'm looking for a family named Jones," said I to him; "do they live in that house?" and I nodded to the one that interested me.

He told me who lived there—and harkee, Jack, as I prove to you the whimsies of Destiny. I have a good memory for names, and instantly I recalled that among the heap of letters left by Ned, should the desire to be neighborly seize me later, was one to the very people who lived in that house.

There was a husband. He was away, except at rare intervals. He traveled for a firm in a big town near by, selling woolens, I think—but it doesn't matter. He didn't matter, either; a quiet, good fellow who kept all the commandments, I verily believe, but who did not in his own person make the commandments attractive. He was always taking pepsin, and admitted a fondness for hot breads. He did not ride or shoot; he wondered at his wife liking long walks across country, and he had a fondness for the elder Dumas, Bulwer Lytton and ice cream. Don't fancy that he was bad-looking or unmanly. I dare say he had principles he'd go to the stake for—which is more than I have—a kind nature and average provincial intelligence. He was simply uninteresting. You wondered, of course, why she married him. Why

did she marry him? I often asked the stars that as I rode home, the spell of her mysterious eyes over me and commingling in memory with his strident good-night. Why *did* she marry him? She never seemed to belong to him.

He was a sort of remote cousin, and I fancy her mother, who had ailed for years and recently died, had favored the marriage to leave her daughter with a protector. She did not love him, and never had. That was positive. Yet he had come to be a part of her life, as a relative is. Habit is strong with women in this sense. Friendship is a passionate thing beside the lukewarm neighborliness that often results in a marriage whose most important note is the economy of co-operation in housekeeping.

I'll say no more of the husband. We saw each other seldom, and I don't believe he felt himself a loser by the fact.

What friends we became—she and I! She was lonely and young. Her days were passed in that prim village, but really her mind and soul were in Paris; and we talked of Paris and art as the twilight came in at the windows of the big front room.

It was a pretty room. She had made the most of its Colonial framework. Neither horsehair nor ugly reps furnished it. There were rugs and rush-seated chairs, and a log always burning in the old fireplace; there were battered copper and pewter vessels and old church vestments bought in the Rue Jean Jacques Rousseau or the Rue Béranger, scattered about, and her own unframed work—flower pieces in water colors or Brittany village scenes with a great deal of red in the roofs and a great deal of violet in the sky—on the buff-colored walls.

Her work was good of its dainty sort, and she had a market for it. She had a sketch of that very old woman with the narcissus in the Temple, and I insisted on purchasing it, without telling her why I wanted it so much.

By degrees I came to know the details of her life from childhood, and the

story of her family. On her father's side she was a French Huguenot; on her mother's, a Puritan. She had devotedly loved her mother, whose sweet, lined face, done by her in pastel, looked down from above the low chimney-piece. It had been difficult to get her mother's permission to study in Paris—for to her Paris was the modern Gomorrah—and during the girl's four years' residence there every steamer had brought her letters from the simple, austere, loving soul filled with terrified prayers to keep herself "unspotted from the world."

The mixture of French gaiety and New England definiteness of character made her a creature of surprises. She never disappointed me for a second. When I tied my horse at the gate and went in for the coffee or tea, sure to be ready in the afternoon, I was never quite sure how I should find her—saucy and disposed to flip-pant argument, or dreamy, or mischievous as a gamin, or thoughtful and inclined to puzzle over the meanings of life, or with the reckless hatred of the monotony of her existence filling her soft eyes with fire. Whatever her mood was, it seemed the most desirable. Ah, she was very lovely, Jack, very lovely, and I fell completely under the spell of her enchantment.

You know a bit of the devil is necessary as an ingredient of a woman's charm—at least, to a bachelor of forty-three—and she had that, too. We grew to be such chums I could talk of life, tell her bare truths about it, speak to her frankly of the experiences a man has. She knew I was not qualified for a saintship. I don't believe it turned her against me. The immaculate man never appealed, because he *was* immaculate, to a woman yet; she prefers the whitening process to begin after she has gathered him to herself.

She had an intellectual appreciation of deviltry. The French in her made her diagnose from curiosity what she held at arm's length. The fact that her neighbors began to notice our friendship and gossip of it

gave it a zest for her, I think. One day, after a long tramp over the country in the Autumn stillness, we stopped to rest on a fallen tree, and she took one of my cigarettes. She held it between her fingers like a glass lifted for a toast, with a droll twitch of her eyebrows and exaggerated wickedness in her slow, laughing glance.

"There is a piquancy in being rigidly respectable and seeming quite improper, don't you think?" she laughed.

She even came to the cottage and dined with me alone twice. I knew the secret was safe with my man, and perhaps because the risk was great the pleasure was great, too. I see her now in the hazy light above the low candles, in dead white, with white flowers in her hair. And such lovely hair! It grew on her head like a cap made of soft tangles—there seemed no precise arrangement of it.

Those dinners were perfect. We chummed it, that was all, though my heart felt boyish again with a new, nervous pain, and her eyes often said what her lips never hinted. She left early, carrying away what books of mine attracted her, and I took her home guardedly, on foot, by secluded paths.

There's a knowing little twist to your mouth, Jack. Believe me, you are wrong. This woman was like no other in my life. I never misunderstood her. The ground on which we met is not often the resting place of men and women, and I admit it is dangerous ground; it only shows at certain pauses of the tide; sooner or later the waters all around it creep over it, and if the man and the woman stand there they drown. One can only reach it and linger briefly, for the end is inevitable.

I had known her by this time almost four months, seeing her constantly and intimately, and during that time I never even told her of having followed her in Paris, I never touched her hand except as friendship permitted.

But I loved her and I knew she loved me.

When I say I loved her, you must not suppose I knew the reckless, self-effacing worship that I understood when I read the poets at college. I would not have died for her. Had she been free I'm sure I should have asked her to marry me, but only as an inevitable condition imposed by honor, for her sake. But, in a way, I was glad this was impossible. I knew I should love her as long as I lived, and to love her without feeling bound had its own reckless charm. I loved her selfishly. It is the only way a bachelor of forty-three who has done nothing with his life but tramp over the known world and study his fellow men—and women—can love. There's the pity of it.

Early in February I got a letter from Ned Moodey from Miami. He was taking three or four others on his yacht to Porto Rico and Cuba. He told me to shut up shop and come by the end of the week.

I sent off a letter to him, a wild, incoherent letter, I fancy, imploring him to ask this woman and her husband. I tried to play the hypocrite by harping on her loneliness in the dull village, and hinted that the trip would do the husband good. I can imagine how Ned roared inwardly. But he sent the invitation by telegraph. Of course, I had known the husband was away, to remain for six weeks.

That's how we came to go to Cuba together. During those days of breeze and blue sea, of short, flaming twilights and lunar brilliance, I grew to call her by her first name.

It was Pamela.

It hurts to talk of that time, Jack. It was so maddeningly sweet. Oh, the blue wonder of those Southern seas and skies! We don't know what deep, bewildering, vertiginous blue is like till we see the pillared palms against it. Who is it speaks of yachting in the South as "a dream between the blue and the blue?" So it is. How far away were the Connecticut village, the falling leaves, the sad skies! Here

nothing was *triste*. The world seemed a magical thing of light, perfume, starshine, of silence but for the trilling lap of waves, of warmth, of love. Those among us whose lives were bare of romance—men like Ned, I mean—even they felt some whisper from such nights which fretted their soulless content. Then what of Pamela and me? Between us a passionate silence hung, so unbearable that at times I was near madness.

We saw then how unsafe was that strip of land we had called good-fellowship, in the midst of the raging seas. The invincible waters were around us now, so there was scarcely a foot's space on which to stand. But we lingered still.

The yacht anchored in the Bay of Matanzas, and we lay off the old fort of San Severino for nearly a week. We were rowed every day to land, went on excursions of all sorts—to ex-Spanish prisons now United States hospitals, to churches, curio shops, pawnshops, rattled over the lumpy pavements of the town in variously broken *coches*, danced on the house-tops under the moon. It was not *life*, Jack—it was *romance* from dawn to sleeping time. I—even I—with this frost of hair on my worldly-wise forehead, found myself writing poetry about it all—poetry like this:

I'll long for the roof-top, low and brown,
Which the palms and starlight know,
The old world peace of the sleeping town
Where only the trade winds blow.
I'll see in fancy a *patio* white
Where a fountain lilts all day,
The screens of jasmine, where filtered
light
Makes flickerings on the spray.

Could I have done worse than this when I was twenty, at Harvard? Oh, the world was new, and I was young again.

On one of the loveliest of afternoons Pamela and I were rowed ashore with the others. We were all to make an excursion on the little Cuban ponies up to the Cumbra. This is the point of a mountain, with a famous view showing the meeting of the Yumuri

River and the sea on one hand, the wonderful valley of the Yumuri on the other.

How pretty Pamela looked in her habit! She wore a big Panama sombrero with black, gauzy stuff knotted about it, and the big brim threw a fascinating shadow over her eyes.

The roads up the mountain are rough. Only these little ponies, sure-footed as chamois, and with a dainty, tripping gait, can carry you safely. Pamela and I rode together. The others were ahead. We rode slowly, the rest rapidly, for the Cumbra must be reached before sunset or the quick night would meet them coming down. As a result of our loitering we found ourselves at last alone in the mountain silence, where two roads crossed, with no sound of voices coming back to tell us which to take. Hallooing brought no answer from our companions, and after consultation, we decided it would be safest to give up the view and wait at the perplexing crossroads till our friends returned.

We tied the ponies and strolled to the right till we came on a villa set in a big garden behind high, rusted palings. The silence was as absolute there as on the mountain road. It was, in fact, a desecrated *casa*, roofless, deserted by every living thing. I opened the unlocked gates for Pamela, and we entered the garden.

The poetry and sadness of it, Jack, cannot be conveyed in words of mine. Broken statues gleamed like nude, dismembered bodies among the tangled foliage; queer, blood-red flowers of heady perfume dotted tangled vines and wound like creeping, living things across the weed-covered paths; a solitary bird called and called in this grievous stillness as if its insistence would bring faces to those charred and open windows, footsteps to the silent galleries; down in the valley somewhere nuns were singing an evening hymn, and the melody was punctuated by the silver beat of a vespers bell. The pathos of Cuba gripped us—Cuba, sumptuous beauty, sitting in rags among the cinders of her homes.

I can't make it plain to you, Jack, just how I came to kiss Pamela there, but I did. My arms were about her, and she leaned against me, sobbing like a hurt child. I remember it all as if through the fumes of some spiritual narcotic. The sweetness, the sadness, the silence were heart-breaking, and I think we suddenly realized that love is always tragic.

The west flamed and deepened to copper, and the eerie tropical twilight came in strides across the heavens. That hour is apart from all others in my life. To think of it to-night, to remember her words, the touch of her lips, the perfume of her hair—ah, to remember!

She loved me as recklessly, as deeply as I loved her. We were to surrender everything for each other. My future was to be hers; hers, mine.

The patter of the returning ponies was a reminder of a world we had forgotten.

At the gateway Pamela looked back through the blue shadows over the deserted garden to the ruined home.

"I wish, somehow, you had not told me here," she said, with a shiver; "I think I'd have died if you had gone out of my life without saying what you have to-day. But I am sad. Is it an omen?"

Wild March weather was holding dreary carnival when we returned to Connecticut and to our separate homes. I did not visit Pamela, as formerly. I was circumspect. Besides, it was easy to bear the separation, we were so soon to be together forever. I had definitely sketched our future as the yacht steamed homeward "from lands of sun to lands of snow," and she had agreed to everything.

The Scotch people who had rented my house in Florence had given it up about six months before. Old Bianca, who had been my nurse, and her son occupied it as caretakers. I was to write her to have it in readiness for us by the middle of April. I engaged passage on one of the steamers leaving by the southern route for Genoa. We were to leave Connecticut for New York on different days, stay at differ-

ent places and go aboard ship under assumed names. When the measureless seas divided the present from the past our life together was to begin.

It was a beautiful dream, Jack—Florentine art, Summer skies and love, eternal love!

There were to be no secret hours together. We were to brush everything away before the world's eyes and openly depend for happiness on each other. The world calls this sin. It is glorious gambling. How much is risked! The little ball of fate whirls madly round the wheel of chance—it may rattle eventually into the niche marked Happiness, and rest there, or maybe into the one marked Despair; but the very impetus with which it is flung saves it from the niche marked Boredom. Isn't it so?

The husband came back for a week. I was sorry he did so, for I knew the deception she must practice hurt Pamela. The man depended on her, needed her care and gentleness, and she had for him the instinct of protection which is a fraction of the mother in every woman. In keeping up appearances I was even asked in to a Sunday evening tea.

Pamela's face thrilled me, frightened me, too. She had awakened to an electric beauty. Her white cheeks held a flame that came and went; her eyes were a bit sunken and had an unhealthy brilliance; her hand, when I touched it, burned and trembled. She seemed possessed of a devil of restlessness, laughed with a new gaiety, went from one thing to another inconsequently.

"Pamela is not well," said the husband to me, with heavy anxiety, as he buttered a hot biscuit. "She doesn't sleep at all. She screamed in her sleep last night and clutched me. She thought she was falling. She ought to see a doctor. See how thin her face is! Advise her to see a doctor; she won't believe me when I say she needs one."

Pamela flung back her head and laughed a little wildly.

"Oh, nonsense, Hal! It's simply the artistic temperament, my dear. I

always told you artists were a bit mad. Soon you'll believe it," and she laughed again.

She disturbed me. She was not like herself.

I managed to say a few words to her before leaving.

"Are you ill?" I asked.

"No; it's the strain—the strain," she muttered, piteously.

"You have no regret?"

"No!" she said, her eyes alight with a defiant happiness.

The husband went away again.

Before leaving the cottage I sent Pamela a last letter of instructions, and placed it in a big basket of hyacinths that had just been forced into bloom in Ned's hothouse. I left for New York last Monday. She was to follow on Wednesday. We were to sail next Saturday.

How shall I tell you the rest? I feel stunned still. Wait—I'll read you the letter. It reached me the day I expected her:

It's no use, Alec, I cannot go. This is no whim, neither is it cowardice or lack of love; but—I cannot go. Oh, how I have suffered! how I have tried to kill something within me which has torn me in holding me back—and dear, dear, how I love you! When you go away, Alec, I feel I shall die; and yet I've come to see I'd rather die here in this stagnation than go with you!

I'll try to tell you about myself. Ever since we returned from the yacht the thing we had planned to do became like a poison—a scourge. In Cuba nothing seemed to matter but love. It was the same as we skimmed over the blue sea. But in this house—oh, it has been different here! Memories of my childhood, my mother's teachings, a pity for my husband, have tortured me. Instead of being sublime, the gratification of my love for you seemed cruel, selfish, wrong. This is what it means to be born a Puritan.

Oh, Alec, I was struggling this way, trying to crucify these inborn monitors, when the basket of hyacinths came from you. They were my mother's favorite flowers. They framed her dear face in the coffin. A few of them, faded, are put away with a lock of her hair. I shut myself into a dark room with these flow-

ers and felt her with me again. In fact, Alec, I fainted there with my face upon them.

Afterward I knew I could not go. Nothing could change me now. I love you and I long for you; but it is as if you were dead and could not be with me. Don't try to see me—not because I fear you could persuade me, but because of the pain to us both. Good-bye, my dear, my love; good-bye.

Of course I went back to see her. On the train I planned arguments and pleadings to move a stone. I would carry her off her feet, sweep her away by the very hunger and force of my love. Oh, she could not resist! I never dreamed of failure! I was desperate, and I felt the will power of a giant.

When I saw her face I couldn't say a word. I was seized and overwhelmed with despair. I knew there were no prayers coined by the deepest love, the direst need, which could move her. In her sunken eyes there was the look I had seen only once on a human face—it was the ghastly hunger, but eternal renunciation of joy, that had flamed under the bony brows of a Siberian convict as the last transfer to the mines was made—and in this look, Jack, there was a decision that was immutable, and I knew that every Puritan ancestor she had was there in spirit, backing her up.

Good people will say she was "a brand snatched from the burning." According to our curious morality it was right for her to stay with the dull, unoffending husband she did not love; it was wrong to go to Florence with me. I cannot think so. At any rate, I did not love her unselfishly enough to save her from myself. You see, I was vain enough to think I could make her happy—I forgot that the Puritan in one never dies.

There, the dawn has found us. You are haggard, Jack, and the fire's out. I am old and cold. My plans, old man? Oh, I shall leave on Saturday, just the same. No, not for Florence—for Monte Carlo.

A WOMAN'S REASON

I SEND your letters back, and humbly pray:
 "Take, too, your ring!"
 I am not faithless, yet no more can say,
 "My lord! my king!"

You had my love once—love that would have dared
 Fate's strong disdain,
 And reckoned earth as heaven, so you but shared
 The loss and gain.

A love that sighed to rifle heaven and earth
 Of every sweet,
 And deck me, that I might, in fitting worth,
 Kneel at your feet!

A love that recked not darkness, neither light,
 Nor cloud, nor fair,
 The glad, gay morning, nor the grieving night,
 With you not there.

Still are you goodly gallant in mine eyes;
 Yet—take your ring!
 Subtly love changeth—subtly is love wise;
 And love is king!

MARTHA McCULLOCH-WILLIAMS.



IDEAL ENOUGH FOR EARTH

MISS BRIDESOON—What is your idea of the ideal lover?
 MISS YELLOWLEAF—The one who marries.



SUBMONITIO

'TWERE wise your debts to liquidate
 While yet on earth you may,
 For fear that in the future state
 There be the devil to pay.

ALEX. ANDREA.

THE TRAGEDY OF TRUE LOVE

A WARNING TO THOSE CONTEMPLATING MATRIMONY

SCENE—A drawing-room. An engaged couple conversing.

SHE—And so, sir, you refuse to explain your conduct?

HE—What on earth is there to explain?

SHE (*satirically*)—Oh, the innocence of you men! *What* is there to explain? Ha! ha! Oh, very fine! *What* is there to explain? How very good! Ha! ha!

HE (*vaguely*)—If you'd only be reasonable—

SHE—That's right—insult me! Oh, I wish mamma were here!

HE (*desperately*)—So do I.

SHE (*viciously*)—Oh, go on—you're tired of my company, so why don't you say so? Well, let us not discuss the subject any further.

HE—What subject?

SHE—Oh—er—any subject. All is over between us—our engagement is ended. Farewell forever!

HE—Helen, stop! Listen to reason— (*She haughtily leaves the room, only to reënter immediately by another door.*)

SHE (*putting her hands around his neck*)—Do you know, dear, that since we parted I've been seriously considering our last quarrel, and have come to the conclusion that things may as well be as they were?

HE (*meekly*)—All right, my love.

SHE (*magnanimously*)—I forgive you.

HE (*humbly*)—Thanks.

SHE—Is that all you have to say?

HE (*wearily*)—What else do you want me to say?

SHE—Oh, I'm not going to put words into your mouth!

HE—Well, shall we go out for a walk?

SHE—Now you're trying to change the subject.

HE (*exasperated*)—Hang it all, what is the matter? I haven't the slightest idea what all this row's about. You abuse me like a pickpocket, and I'll be shot if I stand it any longer!

SHE—How dare you swear before a lady!

HE—Well, I'm off. (*Tries to whistle nonchalantly.*)

She falls sobbing on a couch.

SHE—Oh, I'm a miserable, wretched girl, and you'll kill me with your cruelty.

HE (*weakening*)—I hate to see a woman cry, but this has got to stop some time. Good-bye. You know my address if you want to return my presents.

SHE (*from sofa cushion*)—I don't want to.

HE—Very well, then, tell me at once what your grievance is, or I shall insist on having them back.

SHE (*embracing him*)—Oh, my darling!

HE—Now tell me. (*Puts his arms round her.*)

SHE—It was—was—er—

HE—Come, that's a good girl; what was it?

SHE—I—I—don't quite know what it was.

HE—Then, why the dev—I mean why on earth—?

SHE—Oh, be quiet, you dear old stupid goosey diddledumkins. It's so nice to quarrel and make up! Doesn't it want to take its ickle girlie to the

THE SMART SET

matinée, and wasn't it longing to get her some violets?

HE—I suppose—I mean, oh, of course——

SHE—Then it will go and get its ickle hat on. Be dood boy! (*Exit, kissing her hand.*)

HE (*solus*)—Well, I'm d—d!

After these frequent skirmishes in the lives of engaged young men, can you wonder if they are seen at times with bulging eyes and disheveled hair, drinking cocktails in rapid succession at their club?

C. F. R.



THE FALL FROM GRACE

I SAT beside her yesterday,
And though I did not know her,
Emotion thrilled me in a way
I could not help but show her.
Though she was fair—aye, passing fair,
And all the wide world eyed her,
Yet fervently I longed to swear
When I sat down beside her.

For you must know we met by chance
Upon the sleety crossing;
Her toe flew up—farewell, romance!—
My arms were wildly tossing.
Why she should choose to act like that—
Well, I'm not one to chide her;
I only know that down she sat,
And I sat down beside her!

TOM THATCHER.



WHEN THE DREAMERS WAKE

CORA—Was their marriage a surprise?

LENA—No; but everybody thinks it will be.



WORTH TRYING

SYLVESTER—Why should I propose to Miss Gotrox? I know she doesn't love me.

RICHARDSON—But she may not know it.

TEA ON THE TERRACE

By Marvin Dana

I WAS crossing the lobby of the House of Commons when I ran into Sir James Elton. Knowing his irascible temper, I hastened to apologize.

But it was quite unnecessary; Sir James's face was wreathed in smiles at sight of me.

"You?" he cried, joyfully.

"Yes," I admitted. I could not understand this unusual pleasure in my society.

We are, it is true, both of us stanch Conservatives and Imperialists, but there are those who, while in public party allies, in private life are not wholly congenial—to express a sad truth very gently.

I had never felt myself very desirous of cultivating Sir James, although, as we were in much the same set, I saw him constantly. Chiefly I objected to him because of his monstrous activity. He was forever in a multiple whirl of business, society and politics. He possessed an insulting amount of energy. He was forever in a fume, forever flying hither and yon, intellectually and physically, like that immortal brook of Tennyson's, going on forever, untiring and most tiresome. His constant offenses against the tranquillity of the nations were magnified by his bulk, for he was aggressively tall and broad. He could not, had he wished, have made himself inconspicuous. As a matter of fact, he was consistently obtrusive. Just now, after his manner, he had been charging turbulently across the lobby when he tilted into me. As I drew back an aching foot I regretted that the baronet had not held to his usual more distant demeanor toward me.

Sir James tucked his arm in mine affectionately.

"Come this way, Barnot," he said. "I want you to do me a favor."

I blinked coldly. Sir James was supposed to be rich, yet he dabbled in the City—not always wisely or too well.

"How much?" I asked, with a deterrent lack of enthusiasm.

"How much?" Sir James repeated, doubtfully. Then he snapped:

"Too many! That's the root of the matter. But come with me. I'm expecting Miss Duncan and her mother on the Terrace, and I want you to join the party."

The reaction was great. I clasped Sir James's hand with effusion.

"Anything I can do for you, Sir James, command me. But in this case it is you who are doing me the favor."

Indeed, I was genuinely pleased. Alice Duncan was a particularly pretty girl, and I welcomed this opportunity of a chat with her—a blessed relief from the tedium of the House. Moreover, this opportunity was of a sort not often accorded to me by Lady Duncan. That unappreciative matron reckoned my worth in pounds, shillings and pence, and so found me worse than valueless as a companion for her marriageable daughter. Happily, Alice did not share her mother's dislike. In truth, she was the confidential crony of the dearest girl in the world, so that— But I am writing of other things.

"Here they are!" Sir James exclaimed.

While talking we had passed out of the House, and the carriage drew up at the entrance to the Ladies' Gallery

just as we reached it. I went forward quickly, but unfortunately Sir James was before me, so that there remained for me only the thankless task of assisting Lady Duncan.

"I am so glad to see you, Lady Duncan," I said. But she merely murmured and descended, with a stiffness due partly to her disfavor of me and partly to gout. I made various haphazard remarks as we trailed after the others beneath the shadows of the arched passage, but without marked success.

When we came out on the Terrace Sir James led the way to a table at the west end, close to the parapet overlooking the Thames. Here we were in comparative seclusion, for the tables next us were unoccupied.

Sir James arranged matters with his usual bustle and hurry. And no sooner were we seated than he exclaimed:

"There may be a division in the House. Excuse me for one moment."

With that he was up and away.

I confess that I had some misgivings as to my duties in this emergency, but I did the best I could. A waiter hovered near. I called him.

"Has Sir James ordered?"

"No, sir."

"Well, tea for four, and some strawberries and cakes.

"Is that right?" I turned to Miss Duncan.

"Oh, thank you so much," she answered. "I am so thirsty! I was afraid we'd wait for Sir James, and he is so uncertain."

"Alice!" exclaimed Lady Duncan, "I am surprised! Indeed, for my part, I question whether Mr. Barnot did well in ordering."

"Oh, pray order whatever you prefer," I urged, gently.

"I am not referring to the bill of fare, Mr. Barnot," Lady Duncan retorted, and she fixed her eyes on my forehead.

It seemed to me a pity that Lady Duncan should, quite causelessly, be thus disconcerting. It was a distinct drawback to my enjoyment. However, I tried to forget it. Fortu-

nately, she was so indignant at my flippancy that she maintained a frigid silence for five minutes, while I chatted happily with Alice.

Then Sir James returned, breathless with haste.

"What! you are not taking your tea!" he cried. "Why hasn't the tea been brought? The service here is shocking!"

He called a second waiter and bade him see that due speed be employed. Then he beamed on Miss Duncan, and said:

"That's the handsomest gown in town to-day, and you are worthy of it."

He turned to Lady Duncan, and continued:

"We know where your daughter gets her beauty, madam."

Lady Duncan did not relax. On the contrary, she addressed Sir James bitterly, casting, meantime, a look of disdain in my direction.

"Mr.—ah—Barnot took the liberty of ordering, Sir James."

Sir James turned to me.

"Thanks, awfully, old chap. I'm a thousand times obliged. Oh, by the way," and his face set, "I hope the ladies will excuse us for a moment. I—er—happened to mention your being here to—er—Diglet, and he—"

By this time Sir James had dragged me out of earshot, and he spoke eagerly.

"See here; I'm in a hole, Barnot, and I want your help."

"Trouble in the City?" I murmured, vaguely and dispiritedly.

"No," Sir James answered, crisply.

"Right here on the Terrace!—in the Ladies' Gallery! That's where I want you. You know Mrs. Clarkson, the widow, and her sister, Miss Clayton. They're up there. Go on; hurry, man. Tell 'em I sent you. Bring 'em down—the other end. Thanks so much. You quite understand?"

He had left me and was scurrying off at a disguised trot toward the Duncans. I went to the Ladies' Gallery and made my way to the widow and her sister. They greeted me kindly.

"Sir James was detained a moment, and so allowed me the pleasure of escorting you down to the Terrace," I explained. "You are ready to go?"

"Indeed, yes," laughed the widow. "I have seen who is here. There is only a dreadful speech on Indian currency. I am longing for the Terrace. No gowns here worth the studying."

"I think you hardly need study those of others," I said, amiably, with an admiring glance, for the widow's plump figure was outlined gracefully by a black *crêpe de chine* gown that had obviously been shrunk to the model of her form. The contrasted beauty of her radiant pink-and-white skin and golden hair appealed to me strongly. I think my appreciation showed in my eyes, for the widow smiled kindly on me, and she strolled so slowly that it was five minutes before we came on the Terrace.

Indeed, I was so absorbed that I quite forgot my duties, until, of a sudden, I was painfully recalled by the voice of Sir James. He was standing directly in our path, and as we halted he shot at me a glance so ferocious that I quailed, though I was quite ignorant of any cause for his evident rage.

With an effort he spoke to the widow, softly, so softly that I wondered.

"My dear Mrs. Clarkson, I've engaged a table at the other end. Just turn, and we will go down. Barnot, bring Miss Clayton, if you will be so kind!"

The emphasis was cutting. I turned to the girl, and as I did so, I observed that we were quite close to the table where were Lady Duncan and her daughter.

The mother was sitting rigidly, and ostentatiously looking at the Thames with a scrutiny so absorbed as to give to an unknowing observer the idea that never before had she seen this interesting and muddy river, and that her whole attention was concentrated on it. The quality of the stare caused me to wonder idly that the tide dared to come up in the face of it.

Alice, however, was regarding us

with frank curiosity, and she smiled at me as she caught my eye. I grinned feebly in return, for suddenly it came over me that I had, somehow, made a mess of things. I remembered, with dismay, that Sir James had bid me "bring 'em to the other end." After all, I mused, it is of no importance. Only he is so absurdly choleric. But the women of his assemblies are adorable.

My spirits grew happier once we were duly seated at the east end of the Terrace. Sir James regained his usual bustling gaiety of manner. I ventured to murmur a half-apology in his ear, while the ladies were looking at the new Marchioness of Berks. But he waved it off, with a swift whisper:

"Close thing. But never mind. All right now."

Then, as Miss Clayton turned to him inquiringly:

"Yes, now we are ready, if we can get served decently. The House is going to the dogs. The service is frightful. They manage things better in Smyrna!"

Sir James called a waiter and talked to him in a rapid and belligerent aside that sent the functionary scampering somewhere, anywhere out of range. I noticed that he did not return.

It occurred to me that I ought, perhaps, to return to Lady Duncan and Alice. I spoke interrogatively, with a glance toward the baronet:

"I must go back now. I am so sorry."

Sir James frowned at me.

"Oh, it's not necessary, after all!" he exclaimed, in what he meant to be a debonair manner. "He'll pardon you, since you are with the sex."

Sir James cast a courteous look of devotion toward the widow. But I was perplexed.

"He?" I questioned. "Who is—?"

Sir James glared at me, and I mumbled into silence.

"By Jove! You know, I'm afraid there's a division on," Sir James continued, briskly. "I see our Whip. Barnot, you stay here. I'll return directly. Ladies, I'm behaving shock-

ingly, to dart away like this, but duty is duty. The punishment is mine."

Forthwith he vanished.

"Dear me, what a tiresome man!" the widow said, with a pout. "If he is so busy he should not try to play host."

"I find nothing annoying in the situation," I returned, with an explanatory glance into the widow's eyes.

She laughed, well pleased, her petulance forgot.

"I never saw such a man," she continued. "He is always so full of affairs, so many things on constantly."

"Yes," I smiled; "to-day, for example——"

Then I paused lamely. It occurred to me that Sir James was striving to keep his tea parties in mutual ignorance. That explained his joy in coming on me. I was sent by fate for his catspaw. That explained his wrath when I brought the widow and her sister to the west end of the Terrace. I had almost betrayed him.

I turned and looked over the scattered tables. Yes, there was Sir James with Lady Duncan. He was seated with his back toward us, but he was none the less plainly recognizable.

The widow turned her eyes in the direction of mine, and promptly gave a start of surprise.

"Isn't that Sir James?" she asked, curiously.

"I don't see him," I replied, guiltily, my eyes fixed on the Lollards' Tower of Lambeth Place, across the river.

"Look, Margaret," Mrs. Clarkson continued. "There is Sir James, at the other end, with Alice and Lady Duncan. Whom are they with, I wonder? There is no other gentleman at the table."

I saw an opportunity to do my duty by Sir James, and with some reluctance I seized it. I would win his undying gratitude.

"Oh, they're with me," I said, hastily, with all the bland ease I could summon.

"Really! We should feel ourselves

flattered," said the widow. "But we must not keep you. Pray tell Sir James that the tea is waiting," for at this moment the tray appeared.

I rose at the dismissal and made my unwilling adieux. I had never seen the widow look more charming.

Feeling more like a shuttlecock than ever before or since, I threaded my way among the tables and approached Sir James.

The baronet uttered a stifled exclamation as he saw me.

"Mrs. Clarkson asked me to tell you—" I began.

The consternation on the man's face caused me to break off helplessly. There was a pause full of poignant emotion. Then Sir James extracted a ghostly smile, and muttered:

"Oh, Mrs. Clarkson—a message from Mrs. Clarkson. I saw her taking tea with—er—with—er—Mr. Clarkson. I'll go." He rose.

"I did not know before, Sir James, that you were a medium," Lady Duncan remarked, in a peculiar voice.

"A medium!" Sir James repeated, amazed.

"Necessarily," Lady Duncan answered. "Mr. Clarkson has been dead some years."

"Ha, ha! Did I say Clarkson? Heterophemy! I, of course—er—meant—er—Lord Morris."

The badgered baronet laughed hollowly and rushed away.

"Lord Morris is ill in bed, as I happen to know." Lady Duncan spoke with her eyes fixed stonily on the tea service, and altogether her manner was most alarming. She stood up, and raising her lorgnette, deliberately surveyed the scene. After a moment she turned to me.

"Will you be so kind as to tell Sir James that I wish to leave at once?"

I should have expostulated, but I could find no words suitable for the occasion. Then a happy thought came to me.

"Perhaps, as you are going, I may make my farewells now. I've had such a pleasant afternoon. Thank you so much,"

"Good afternoon," Lady Duncan replied.

But Alice smiled kindly on me.

I hurried to the east end of the Terrace. The tide was going out—and small wonder, I thought, vaguely.

Sir James's face grew dismal as I loomed on his horizon.

"Lady Duncan—" I began.

But again Sir James interrupted me:

"I say, Barnot, do stay in one place for a moment! Send for some more strawberries when that sloth reappears, if he ever does. I see my secretary beckoning to me. I won't be gone a minute."

And he tore himself from us.

"Lady Duncan," Mrs. Clarkson said, in her softest voice, "does not like me. I am so sorry."

She paused.

I said nothing. I knew very well that Lady Duncan's eldest son had been madly in love with the widow for years, for no fault of hers, rather for her perfections. But I did not see my way clear to any tactful remarks on the subject.

"But Alice and I are good friends," the widow continued.

At this moment Sir James and the two ladies were seen leaving the Terrace. Alice was a little behind the others. She turned and nodded and smiled toward us. Sir James and Lady Duncan looked neither to right nor to left; his face was full of dismay, hers was of arctic coldness.

The widow laughed daintily.

"Can you keep a secret?" she asked me.

"I'm afraid not," I replied, thinking of the afternoon's experiences.

"Anyhow, I'll risk it," she said.

"Last week Sir James asked me to come to tea on the Terrace this afternoon. I refused. I spoke of it to Alice at the Flower Show yesterday. She told me that Sir James had just invited her and her mother."

The widow paused. Her hand-

some eyes met mine, and there was roguery in them. The quiet Miss Clayton, too, showed open amusement.

"Well?" I urged.

The widow tantalized me. She took a berry, dipped it in the sugar and touched it with cream. She ate it slowly.

"I do not understand," I remonstrated.

"Sir James is so fond of pretty faces," she remarked, absently.

"Tell me."

The widow looked at me again, inquiringly.

"Did you know that Sir James had proposed to Alice, and that she had refused him?"

I was amazed, and I said so.

"He is so fond of pretty faces," the widow continued, nonchalantly. "He could not disappoint me when I sent him a note saying that I had managed it, after all, and would come this afternoon. Did you know that Lady Duncan was making Alice miserable by urging her to reconsider her refusal of Sir James? Lady Duncan has quite set her heart on the match. Sir James is rich, and she likes him—as much as she can anyone."

"I don't think she liked him this afternoon," I said, with a vivid memory of her face as I had last seen it.

A sudden light broke on my dark wits.

"Did Alice know you would write that note?" I asked.

The widow's answer was a laugh, and there was mischief in the ripple of it. But she said nothing.

"Alice seemed rather to enjoy the tea party," I suggested, musingly.

"We owe you an apology, for you did not seem altogether happy," she answered.

"I did it to oblige Sir James," I explained.

Whereat the widow laughed as heartily as a body may on the Terrace.



THE HARVEST

OH, I saw her at the time of the sowing of the grain—
 The April sun had broken through a filmy mist of rain,
 And a little wind and sweet
 Swayed the grasses at her feet
 As I turned to look and turned to smile and turned to look again;
 And I said, "How good a thing
 Is the promise of the Spring!"
 At the time of the sowing of the grain.

Oh, I kissed her at the time of the growing of the grain—
 Her laugh was like the melody that threads the lark's refrain;
 Bud and blossom everywhere
 Sent their perfume through the air
 And the branches bent above her where the ripening fruit was lain;
 And I said, "Lo, love hath grown
 Like the seed thy hand hath sown!"
 At the time of the growing of the grain.

Oh, I won her at the time of the mowing of the grain—
 We guided o'er the empty fields the heavy-laden wain,
 And my life was like to sing
 With the joy of harvesting!
 Oh, love's sowing, nor his growing, nor his mowing was in vain!
 And I said, "Give thanks, my heart,
 For the store that is thy part!"
 At the time of the mowing of the grain.

MC CREA PICKERING.



JUST LIKE A MAN

ASKINGTON—Thought you had given up smoking, to please your wife?
 FLINT—Have! Smoke now to please m'self.



FÉCONDITÉ

YOU meet a Lie upon your way,
 And kick it over; do not wonder
 If you should find, exposed to day,
 A brood of others hiding under.
 A single Lie's a wonder rare indeed;
 But one is barren where a thousand breed.

DOROTHY DORR.

POINT D'ALENÇON

By Katharine de Wolf

AS Van Twiller stood waiting in the shadow of the Hôtel des Anglais, his mind sped, like a runaway automobile, past the mile-stones of the last twenty-five years, snorting over the *Sturm und Drang* period of a rather riotous youth passed at various Continental capitals, bumping against the cobbles of ensuing adversities, gurgling appreciatively over the smooth asphalt of his brief married life—and as the mental lever re-asserted itself, steaming decorously along the avenue of recent years so alluringly illuminated by the incandescent lights of Success and Wealth.

And then he remembered he had a grievance. He strode into a zone of light and looked at his watch. It lacked a quarter of midnight.

"Confound it, the fellow's late!" he muttered, with the growl of a deeply injured man.

To his friends—and they were many—Stuyvesant Van Twiller represented a most happy combination of those various qualifications, both acquired and innate, which would have induced them to view with pleasure the sight of his handsome self heading a recessional, with the fairest of their daughters, down the aisle of Grace Church to the strains of Mendelssohn. To himself, however, "Van" was simply a rather unsatisfactory—but highly interesting—psychological puzzle whose discrepancies were to be good-naturedly accepted—in view of many compensating attributes—on the ground of his pet theory of hereditary influences. His mother had been a pretty, frivolous Creole, and to the incompatibility that had existed between her and his middle-aged, practical-

minded sire "Van" apologetically referred, in mild self-extenuation, whenever his incongruities disturbed his own nice sense of moral equilibrium. But his gently administered admonitions rarely extended—naturally enough—beyond a retrospective glance at the parental shortcomings. To have even attempted to minimize the subtle potency of the vast army of prenatal forces accumulated by his progenitors would have overthrown not only a cherished creed, but the whole basis of his easy-going life, in which pleasure and propriety were mingled with commendable impartiality.

It was a balmy Spring night at Nice. To Van Twiller, fresh from Manhattan, the myosotis-laden air, the palms and sea, spoke with the exhilarating seductiveness of reincarnated memories. What if he was past forty—he felt an almost feminine disinclination to looking the full forty-five in the face—could not Youth, the golden-hued, though hastening away in the distance, throw back an occasional glance over the shoulder?

And then there was Edith—

At this juncture hasty footsteps sounded on the promenade opposite, and an instant later a grotesque figure stood before him. Both men broke into a simultaneous laugh.

"Well, Dyer, that is a disguise!"

"Speak for yourself, Van! What would the vestrymen of St. Bonifacius, or the board of the Eye and Ear, not to mention your *confrères* of the St. Nicholas, say if they could see you, their unimpeachable friend, in such a get-up?"

It was mid-Lent and the night of the White Redoute. After countless

confabulations Jack Dyer had decided to appear at the ball, to which he had induced Van Twiller to accompany him, in the costume of Pierrot. In accordance with the ball regulations, everything—from the point of his sugar-loaf hat to the tip of his shoes, including even his face and admirably vacuous expression—was the color of untrodden snow. Fortunately, the dress specifications did not extend to the color of one's moral equipment.

From a figurative standpoint, the elder man was perhaps even more of a whited sepulchre in the spotless garb and peaked cowl of a Franciscan monk. A patriarchal sweep of beard and a *Wotan* luxuriance of hair hid what of his visage was not concealed by the strip of satin, and completed an *ensemble* that would have defied the scrutiny of a Vidocq or a Bertillon.

Pierrot laughed again.

"To think that only a month ago you stood in front of the altar, in the Avenue de l'Alma, with a tiara-like nimbus of refulgent resolutions clamped on your gray locks! I'm proud of my work."

"As well you may be," retorted the other, grimly.

"I suppose, of course, that you told your wife of our little expedition?" queried Dyer, maliciously, as they proceeded toward the Place Masséna.

"Ahem—no. After suffering all day with headache, and having her head swathed in wet cloths, she disappeared early to bed. So it was quite unnecessary for me to mention the matter. You see, this is my first opportunity, one might say, of becoming acquainted with my wife, Jack, and it wouldn't do to hoodoo myself needlessly. That week of courtship in Paris, under the perpetual surveillance of three maiden aunts, started me in the race under a terrible handicap. But, if I do say it, my boy, I've made a record for myself in these few weeks since the wedding. Ah, don't talk to me of women of mature years and ripe experience for wives, Jack! Give me the tender little flower that clings to you, and looks

on you as a sort of demi-god, and never asks too many questions. Really, come to think of it, I hadn't the slightest disinclination to tell her of our plans for this evening; I merely refrained from feelings of pity; it would have hurt her so to learn of my levity. I remember now that my conscience gave me a distinct prodding as I tiptoed past her door, and realized how it would cut her to the heart to recognize me in my disguise!"

"Don't let your conscience become a spendthrift in the way of superfluous messages. Your wife could have looked you in the eye and yet not have known you—for the fraud you are."

"And to think that's the child I used to hold on my knees years ago; the little orphan my first wife thought of adopting! Whew! what a piquant muddle that would have made of the situation! And who would have thought that even ten years of French school life could have changed her from the wild, dark-eyed, will-o'-the-wisp dare-devil she was as a child into such a demure, limpid-glancing, exquisitely unspoilt young creature! By Jove, it makes one doff one's hat anew to the soundness of a Frenchman's views about the bringing up of his womankind."

Van Twiller and his friend had already crossed the brilliantly festooned Place, over which his huge Majesty King Carnival presided in state beneath a scaffolding gay with bunting and flowers. When, a moment later, they reached their *loge*, the ball was at its height, the distribution of prizes by the pink-coated Messieurs du Comité having just taken place. The much-mooted question of supremacy between Autairau and Seniori, the two rival queens of the season, had been decided by the awardment of a banner to the latter—who, with the wealth of a year's revenue from the biscuit factory blazing on her, was triumphantly beaming by the English manufacturer's side.

On the floor all was pandemonium—

a glittering, snowy mass writhing in a hundred contortions, like a huge white octopus.

"A lot of the Cannes set are over here to-night," announced Dyer, who some years before had been attached to the Embassy in Paris during the Isaac Q. Lawton *régime*, and was as thoroughly at home in Continental as in New York society. "Over there, I'm sure, is Mrs. George Lex, in the box with Jiggins and the Baroness. And next to that——"

"Come, use your sense of divination to some good purpose. Who is the mysterious domino in the last box on this side, so conspicuously alone?"

Regretfully Dyer shook his head as he removed several layers of white grease paint from his *binocle*. "It's hard enough to tell the sex, even, at this distance," he answered. "But——" with the reflective air of an authority in such matters—"whoever she is, I'll wager that her purpose here is an interesting one, with such risks attached that she has had to resort to a domino instead of simply fancy dress; either a case of a jealous wife who hopes to recognize her husband, or of a very unjealous one who fears her husband might recognize her. On the whole, I rather incline to the latter theory."

"See, she is getting up to leave."

"Well, let's follow and see the fun. I shouldn't be surprised if she turned out to be the Grand Duchess Aspasia of Sticklenbergh. They say she's very frisky."

II

"How utterly preposterous this evening will appear a few hours hence, when I make my morning salutations at the shrine of the family Lares and Penates," remarked the domino, lifting the lace valance of her mask for a sip of *café turc* at the close of their supper in one of the upper rooms of the Helder.

"Yet more preposterous, *chère madame*, is your hard-hearted inflexibility. From my garb, you know me to be a seeker after light. There-

fore I am but adhering to a noble purpose when I again beseech you to bestow the light of your countenance upon me," replied Van Twiller, with mellow post-prandial courtliness.

"And our compact, grave and reverend father!" laughed the unknown, reprovingly. "Can a man of the cloth go back on his word?"

"Very easily, when he's made out of whole cloth, like Van," reflected Dyer, grimly.

"Besides, uncertainty, like a Welsbach burner, serves to compress to greater brilliancy the poor flickering little light to which you have referred."

"Your logic is loose. Certainty excels uncertainty just as convincingly as limelights outdo all smaller efforts in the way of illumination."

"Do you know," observed the woman, meditatively, in her prettily modulated voice, "from time to time there is a certain something about your voice that I cannot explain. You are sure you are not an American?"

"God forbid!" protested Van Twiller, with all the fervor of the apostate Yankee on the threshold of the Court of St. James.

"My life has been so dull and uneventful, so thoroughly inadequate to the demands made upon it by my imagination, that I cannot blame myself as I should for this escapade. In fact, to-morrow will find me back again in the old rut, the more contented because of this small insubordination."

"Why speak so apologetically of that for which you are, in reality, no more responsible than for the color of your eyes or the shape of your ears?" broke in Van Twiller, earnestly, mounting his pet hobby with unclerical haste. "Don't you know, *chère enfant*, that our forefathers scribbled over and thumb-marked each page of our little book of life long before the paltry pamphlet was ever put into our hands? And because the tracings have faded, are we to think the page blank for us to write on? But invisible ink is no mere conjurer's trick. Just apply an ap-

parently empty page to the heat of some unexpected crisis, and there you are, confronted by the ink in all its pristine, diabolical blackness."

"How truly delightful!" chimed in the domino, with frivolous fervor. "Instead of restricting absolution to the confessional, here, on the spot, in this *salon particulier*, you release me almost from the burden of my sins?"

"Most assuredly I do," announced this mendacious mentor, in a tone of almost self-deceiving conviction.

A gesture from Dyer interrupted them. In fact, Dyer's participation in the proceedings had been mostly of a gesticulatory nature, owing to Van Twiller's purposely misleading statement that they were both Germans, and to the fact that the ensuing conversation had largely been carried on in a language with which Dyer was unfamiliar, but in which "Van"—thanks to his Heidelberg days—was thoroughly at home. The mantle of a silent sage, thus gratuitously thrust upon him by his friend, sat ill, as he was himself bound to admit, on the shoulders of a Pierrot of pantomimic propensities. Yet alternative was there none; nor is it certain he would have profited had there been an alternative. In the first few minutes after the unexpected realization of the plan he had proposed to his friend in their *loge*, Dyer had looked over the ground, metaphorically, and concluded that it was either a case of "the queen can do no wrong" or—of a very broad-minded queen whose ideas on such subjects were liberal. Yet, despite his vigilance, Dyer was still uncertain in which category to classify the unknown fair one, though, almost involuntarily, still inclined to assign her to some little niche in the *Almanach de Gotha*. However, in spite of these interest-inspiring premises, the adventure was sinking to the level of a deadly decorous disappointment; and before the *entremets* had been removed Dyer had retired from the contest, as having met a foe unworthy of his steel—a wise conclusion for him to arrive at, inasmuch as his steel had

been long since stolen from him by his friend.

The unknown crossed the room to the piano. From out of a tremulous nebula of harmonies gradually emerged the chords of the Swan Knight's warning song:

"Nie darffst du mich befragen
Noch Wissen Sorge tragen
Woher ich komm'
Noch meinen Nam' und Art."

As she sang she laughingly emphasized the words in reply to interrogations spoken and unspoken.

Van Twiller settled back in his *fauteuil* to the double enjoyment of the music—which he adored—and of a further summarizing of the strange prize he had drawn in the Carnival *tombola*. His critical eye took in the tip of the dainty satin shoe and the billows of filmy flounces over which the stiff folds of the domino fell, betraying, despite their severity, the suppleness of curves and grace of pose beneath.

"Piquante, paradoxical, perplexing and—pretty, as I'm sure I'll be able to add before the evening's over, who and what *can* she be? Of course one must make due allowance for the fact that she could not fail to take me for what I am, when we rescued her from the drunken ruffians—but the position is, nevertheless, slightly anomalous. Yet she bears herself, in the face of it, with all the dignity of a *doyenne* of the diplomatic corps. What a little mass of contradictions! I must quote her case in my book; she'll be an admirable example of the warring instincts of the various traits. Naïve as a novice, yet negatively naughty. I must jot that down to-morrow."

"*Nun sag' Adieu, mein lieber Schwann,*" chanted the enigma, with melting tenderness.

"Poor child! no doubt married from the convent to some rascal of a Frenchman who neglects her for the other *ménage*." Concluding the diagnosis somewhat hastily, with a burst of sympathy for the neglected young wife, Van Twiller crossed the room to her side.

"I am sure he is most unkind to you," he whispered, pursuing his previous train of thought. "Unappreciative, severe, narrowing down your innocent amusement, and all the while enjoying his own liberty to the utmost——"

"*Ah, pour ça, je n'en sais rien.* It is possible."

"Have no scruples on your conscience in regard to this evening, *chère enfant*. I know men. Rest assured, wherever he is at present his thoughts are not of you, else you would not be here."

The woman's laugh suggested a keen appreciation of humor. "*Ce pauvre absent ambigu!* Let us at least drink our parting toast to him. To my tyrant!" she exclaimed, holding aloft her glass.

"And to the pleasure of deceiving deceivers," added Van Twiller, sentimentously.

Dyer's martyrdom was at an end. With his tenth cigar he had completed some highly philosophical reflections—meditating lugubriously on the fact that none of the little, withered apples of fable had fallen to his lot—only roasted chestnuts, laboriously pulled out of the fire for another's edification. Alas, that he had proposed following that detestable domino!

"I will go in advance to order madame's coupé," he announced, in flowing Yanko-Franco, making his final exit with as much authority as the circumstances permitted.

The door closed behind him. The woman immediately moved toward it. Crossing the room Van Twiller intercepted her on her way. Placing his two hands on her shoulders, he looked straight down into the depths of her eyes.

"You icy woman!" he muttered, "you've chosen well; white is, indeed, your color—not a soft, fluffy white, but the blue-green frigidity of a glacier. Now, let me see your face."

"Never! You would be a coward to break your promise to me," she cried, in unfeigned fear.

Van Twiller laughed almost brutally.

"Oh, that promise! Of course we both understood that some such sop had to be thrown to the conventionalities as a prelude to our further acquaintance. But neither you nor I took it for more than it was worth. Come, just a glimpse of your face, that's not too much to ask."

The woman's only answer was to cower away from him, clutching the mask to her face with desperate strength. He tried to tear it from her, but her grasp was strong. As she stood hesitating, the fastenings between her domino and hood gave way, and the lovely stretch of a firm young neck and shoulders was revealed.

Of ice there was no suggestion in its warm, pink prettiness, and if the man thought of his smile it was but to recollect, as his kisses rained down fast and burning, that the warmth of Spring storms oft washes away even the snowy masses on Alpine heights.

An instant later they passed down the staircase to the carriage. Silently and with the rigidity and frigidity of an automaton she allowed him to tuck in the flounces of her skirt and make his adieux. But he failed to notice the blight that had fallen on her with his kisses. Back into the brilliantly lighted anteroom he strode for an instant and carefully folded away inside his cardcase a long, filmy strip of lace. Who knew?—perhaps some day they might meet again.

III

WITH merciless complacency the broad light of a superb Southern day was showing up the dirt and débris, the drooping decorations and mud-stained mounds of *confetti*, when Van Twiller finally reached his rooms. And, as he flung himself down, weary and dejected, that selfsame light penetrated with a beam yet more searching than the strongest Röntgen, and discovered many a dark corner of his conscience which had not been looked into since the days of his last mental house-cleaning.

"The Dutch are having their

day," he reflected, with a faint smile. Strangely enough, he had always failed to notice that the reproachful little band never appeared except as a sort of spiritual *chiar-oscuro* in the train of his more gaudy-hued Southern progenitors. Van Twiller shrank back as the austere, shadowy procession swept past him—the old Governor whose name he bore at their head—with their withering glances and quaint, old-fashioned homilies about man's honor and woman's trust.

"Since when has knight-errantry been transplanted to the *entourage* of a masked ball, pray?" spoke up a cynical shadow-voice from the back-ground.

"Quite true," said Van Twiller, turning with eager, grateful relief—as always—to the timely suggestion of his Latin strain. "I need waste no regret on such an adept in the art of deceit as she. She's at her home, no doubt, now, explaining to her husband that her pallor is caused by a *migraine*."

Of a sudden, up from the street below came the clear, inspiring sound of bugles, joined to the march of many feet. Van Twiller opened his balcony window. A regiment of Alpine *chasseurs* was passing, on their way to the morning maneuvers. On the pavement, hurrying to their day of toil, were the sturdy, honest bread-winners; out beyond, the glittering sea, wafting a saline greeting on the

crisp, pure breeze; overhead, the glorious blue dome smiling down with godlike impartiality on the good and the bad.

The man looked down at himself—dusty, with unkempt hair, a crumpled, wine-stained shirt-bosom, his dress in ludicrous disorder.

Disgust—boundless and overwhelming—for himself, for his weaknesses and self-styled virtues, for his failures and loudly proclaimed successes, overtook him.

Toward noon, once more his well-groomed, faultless self, he knocked at the door of his wife's apartments.

"*Madame est sortie, monsieur*," announced Thérèse, before resuming her work.

"She has gone out?" repeated Van Twiller, dully.

"*Mais oui, monsieur, avec sa dame de compagnie*, half an hour ago, for a little walk on the promenade."

"What are you doing, Thérèse?"

"*Moi, monsieur?* I am mending a *jupon* of *madame*. It is very badly torn, as you can see. But the lace is very beautiful; it is a piece of Point d'Alençon," she added, with the Abigail's ever ready smile for her liberal master.

Van Twiller heard her, but her voice seemed to come from far away. With a stiff gesture he reached down into his pocket for his cardcase. From it he took a long strip of filmy lace. He laid it on the torn flounce.

The fragments matched.



THE CHANGING SEASONS

NOW dawns the Spring. Beneath the tender blue
Behold the earth all carpeted anew:
Wilton and ingrain, swaying on the line;
Velvet and Brussels, brilliant in design.
Without—a world attired in raiment fair;
Within—alas! a world forlorn and bare,
Where many a weary mortal, suds-besprent,
Roams 'mid the Winter of his discontent.

EDWIN L. SABIN.

THE AWAKENING

By Daisy Katherine Burner

THE light burned low in the sick-room and the air was pungent with the odor of drugs and heavy with the breath of roses. The sick man tossed restlessly on his pillows and wondered fretfully if his wife had been two hours or one eating her dinner. In reality, she had been gone about fifteen minutes; but how could he be expected to know the exact time when he had banished the little French clock because its ticking irritated him? He was fearfully depressed; it seemed as if all the sins and follies of his life were haunting him. Now that little affair with Mrs. Van Dermott . . .

Hark! That was the drawing-room door, and—yes, his wife's voice came clearly up the staircase—"I will ring for his toast if he is awake."

Then he heard the clatter of her high-heeled slippers on the parquet of the hall, and listened petulantly for their subsequent muffling in the rugs. Through the open door her figure was plainly visible as she approached, and he wondered listlessly why, unlike most married women, she was still erect and lithe, with all the gracious curves he had loved in her girlhood.

As she entered the room, a fancy came to him to feign sleep, and he closed his eyes and drew his breath with all the languor of deep slumber. He heard her step softly to the bedside, and knew that she was surveying him intently.

When she finally turned away, he felt something warm on his hand, and opening his eyes, regarded it with a feeling of awe. Women who cried

on every occasion were intensely distasteful to him, but his wife—why, the last time he had seen tears on her face had been long ago, when the baby was born, and he, coming in for a few precious moments, had taken both mother and child into his arms. How long ago it seemed, and how many months had since passed without even the semblance of a caress from him! Oh, well, what with the new Country Club and an absorbing flirtation with Mrs. Van Dermott, he had seen but little of the woman who bore his name.

She had gone to the window now and was leaning far out into the night, drawing deep breaths of the rose-laden air. How still her figure was in the lamplight! Funny the years made no change. Her hair—why, it was still the golden brown of her girlhood. How well he remembered the sunshine playing over it during those first happy weeks of their married life, that it was golden in the sun and brown in the shade! And her soft, fair skin—it had always seemed fairer than that of any other woman. The round, white throat and tapering arms were still lovely in their delicate beauty where the loose house dress left them exposed. How he had worshipped that gracious, yielding figure, so curved and free from disfiguring angles! Yes, his wife *was* a beautiful woman, even more lovely than her girlhood had promised. He remembered hearing someone say this the last time they entertained. Margaret had stood in the hall—a conspicuous figure in her white gown; he was talking to Mrs. Van Dermott, and had noted her

quick glance into a convenient mirror, as if conscious of the contrast between them. *Contrast!* Mrs. Van Dermott, who spent her days in . . .

Oh, well, let well enough alone. And Margaret—how *did* she pass her days since the baby went away? She must be beastly lonesome. He often dined out, and with only the servants . . .

His mind turned over and over that unanswerable question, from a man's standpoint, of what a woman does with the long hours of her day. He tried to picture her ordering the dinner—the dinner so often eaten in solitude—arranging the flowers in the library, attending to her correspondence, reading, lunching alone, perhaps driving in the late afternoon, and finally dressing for her late dinner with the forlorn hope of *his* coming, only to be disappointed; then the solitary dinner and the long evening, with an occasional social function, but more often a weary vigil for him at home. God! he could not live like that!

Some men might question what she did with the weary days and lonely nights, might even dare to suspect—but Margaret, never! Even fallen so low himself, he put her above all wrong. A loving woman? His memory went back to spurned caresses and the putting away of clinging arms. A faithful wife? Oh, dear God, yes; the weary hours of this long illness, when she never left him!

He turned a little on his pillows, a *very* little, so as not to disturb the figure at the window. He *would* do better. What a difference between this gracious, womanly woman and the women who filled his leisure hours! Oh, he would speak to her now and tell her it was all over, like a bad dream. He would put his arms about her and hold her close until she said, as of old, "My dear, dear boy!" but even as the purpose was forming he saw her turn swiftly and walk to her desk.

Her movements were always impulsive, never deliberate. She turned a key and drew from an inner recess a

pile of letters, a bundle done up in soft tissue paper and two photographs. Evidently she was intensely moved, for she did not even glance at the bed, but dropping into a low chair, she read the letters one by one, pressing them to her face and blotting them with a rush of warm tears. As the last one slipped from her hand she caught up the pictures with a little passionate gesture, and laying her face against them, she sat almost motionless and in silence save for an occasional deep sob. The bundle slipped to the floor, and as the ribbon fell away he caught a glimpse of a little, half-worn shoe. He sat up with a low ejaculation; the baby—but those pictures and letters! God! Margaret, his wife, reading what were evidently love letters and sobbing over pictures! Letters from whom and pictures of whom? And he had trusted her so! Who was her secret lover? By heaven! he should suffer for his infamy!

He dragged himself up, heedless of his weakness, and began to move toward her very slowly and painfully, using the chairs to help him along. Weak—yes, he was weak, but he had strength to crush her lover and to—What a lifetime of revenge he lived in that short journey to her chair, and how the fires of jealousy burned his very soul! Even in his anguish he noticed the little curl on her neck which he had kissed in those happy days, and now . . .

He stumbled, and she raised her head and saw him standing there pale and trembling. With a great cry of love she ran to him and strove to lead him back, but he put her away, and still holding her by the arm, pointed to the letters and pictures scattered on the floor. At the gesture a great wave of crimson overspread her face. He stood waiting, relentless. Finally, blushing with what he deemed her guilt, she laid them in his hand and threw herself into a chair, hiding her face.

His eyes grew dim for a moment, and then he saw that the first picture was of the baby, the other—was he mad?

—was of *himself*, taken before their marriage. And the letters, dear God! were his, written in the first flame of his love and passionate devotion.

“Margaret!” it was the cry of a tortured man—“Margaret! can you—do you love me yet?”

There was no answer. Her face was still averted.

“Margaret!” His voice was full of entreaty, and his arms were about her. Oh, the thrill of that old embrace!

At last she raised her eyes, and then—he knew.



LINES TO BETTY'S EASTER BONNET

BEHOLD a vision sweet and rare!
It sets upon the chestnut hair
That frames a charming face and fair
As e'er was fashioned.
A face with eyes of deepest brown—
Their like is not in all the town—
A face that merits the renown
Of odes impassioned.

Ah, Providence was passing kind
When with a face so sweet, refined,
All other graces it combined
In rare perfection.
And what a lucky chap were he
Who might, with due humility,
Proclaim: This prize belongs to me—
Hath my protection!

Moreover, what a fool am I
If, coward-like, I fail to try
To be that lucky chap *or die*—
By Jove! I'll do it!
I'm going to ask this very night—
The bonnet? I'd forgot it quite;
Some other day I'll have to write
Those verses to it.

TRUMAN ROBERTS ANDREWS.



WORTH SEEING

HE—I'd like to see that woman's face light up once,
SHE—Which one?
“The one with the lantern jaw!”

TIME'S REVELATION

HE sat before the open fire, holding in his hand an old and crumpled tobacco pouch. It was his birthday, and he was communing with the past.

On this night twenty-eight years ago he had received the gift he now held in his hand, and which had changed the destiny of his life. Instinctively his fingers closed over it with fierce intensity. The bitter memories of that night rose before him in all the vividness of reality, and aroused again the anguish of his soul.

Then a smile flitted across his face at the remembrance of her—the girl he had loved.

They had had a lovers' quarrel—perhaps the most serious of their six-months' engagement. But on his birthday, as a peace-offering, he had sent her a bunch of roses, and with them a message of love—a passionate, heart-yearning missive, imploring her forgiveness and swearing eternal devotion to her, the idol, the light of his life.

In return he had received this!—a cheaply made tobacco pouch, inscribed, in worked letters, "A Bachelor's Comfort."

That was her answer. So far as she

was concerned, he might remain a bachelor. He had divined the cruel meaning in a moment, and with a fierce oath had flung the accursed token of rejected love into the ashes of the dying fire.

Found there by a servant and relegated to the limbo of discarded bric-à-brac, it had lain hidden all these years until to-night, when he had come across it while ransacking an old chest.

And now, as he gazed on the resurrected cause of his life's unhappiness with mingled emotions of love and hate, he mechanically opened the strings of the faded silken bag. There, in its inner folds, lay a scrap of paper.

He snatched it forth with trembling fingers and hastened toward the light. Nervously and with fumbling haste he adjusted his glasses, as he held the bit of yellowed paper before the lamp. For a moment his hand shook so that he was unable to decipher the faint, almost obliterated, writing.

Then, suppressing his emotion, he read these words, scribbled in a dainty, feminine hand: "Warranted hand-sewed; price, 50 cents."

CLIFFORD HOWARD.



NO WORDS TO WASTE

GIBBS—What's your advice to a fellow in love?

GIBBS—I never have any advice to throw away.



UNSHAKEN DEVOTION

SHE—It is hard to lose one's friends.

HE (*suddenly become rich*)—Yes, if one has money.